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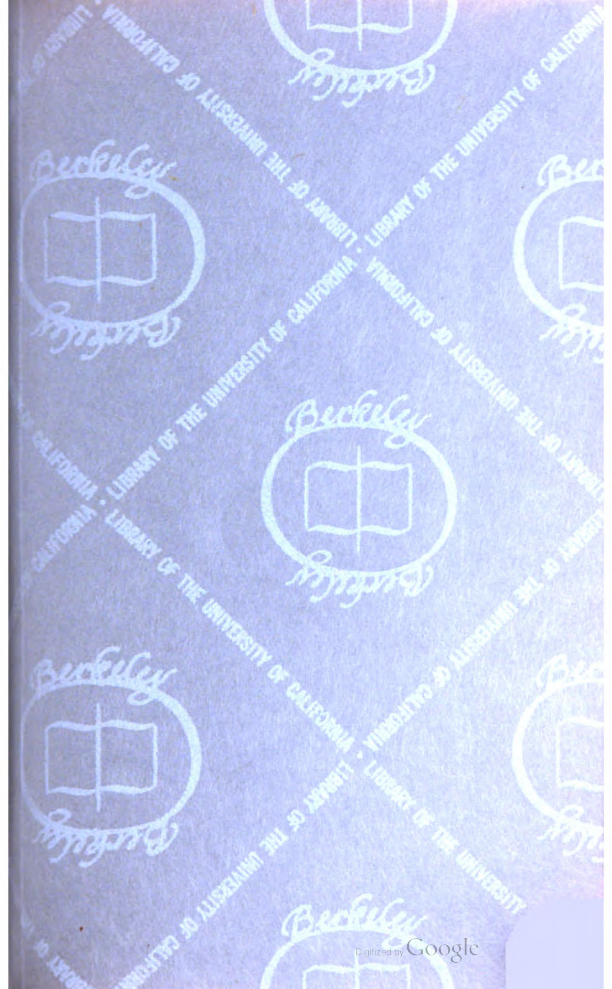
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SKETCHES OF THE HISTORY
OF
LITERATURE AND LEARNING
IN ENGLAND.

WITH SPECIMENS OF THE PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

By GEO. L. CRAIK, M.A.

SERIES THIRD (IN TWO VOLUMES).

FROM THE REVOLUTION OF 1688 TO THE
PRESENT DAY.

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BOOK VII.

EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION OF 1688 ON OUR LITERATURE.

THE Revolution, brought on by some of the same causes that had given birth to the Commonwealth, and restoring something of the same spirit and condition of things, came like another nightfall upon our higher literature, putting out the light of poetry in the land still more effectually than even that previous triumph of the popular principle. Up to this date English literature had grown and flourished chiefly in the sunshine of court protection and favour; the public appreciation and sympathy were not yet sufficiently extended to afford it the necessary warmth and shelter. Its spirit, consequently, and affections were in the main courtly; it drooped and withered when the encouragement of the court was withdrawn, from the deprivation both of its customary support and sustenance and of its chief inspiration. And, if the decay of this kind of light at the Revolution was, as we have said, still more complete than that which followed upon the setting up of the Commonwealth, the difference seems to have been mainly owing to there having been less of it to extinguish at the one epoch than at the other. At the Revolution the impulse given by the great poets of the age of Elizabeth and James was yet operating,

without having been interrupted and weakened by any foreign influence, upon the language and the national mind. Doubtless, too, whatever may be thought of the literary tendencies of puritanism and republicanism when they have got into the ascendant, the nurture both for head and heart furnished by the ten years of high deeds, and higher hopes and speculations, that ushered in the Commonwealth, must have been of a far other kind than any that was to be got out of the thirty years, or thereby, of laxity, frivolity, denationalization, and insincerity of all sorts, down the comparatively smooth stream of which men slid, without effort and without thought, to the Revolution. No wonder that some powerful minds were trained by the former, and almost none by the latter.

SURVIVING WRITERS OF THE PRECEDING PERIOD.

With the exception of some two or three names, none of them of the highest class, to be presently mentioned, almost the only writers that shed any lustre on the first reign after the Revolution are those of a few of the survivors of the preceding era. Dryden, fallen on what to him were evil days and evil tongues, and forced in his old age to write for bread with less rest for his wearied head and hand than they had ever had before, now produced some of his most laborious and also some of his most happily executed works: his translation of Virgil, among others, his Fables, and his Alexander's Feast. Lee, the dramatic poet, discharged from Bedlam, finished two more tragedies, his Princess of Cleve and his Massacre of Paris, before, "returning one night from the Bear and Harrow, in Butcher-Row, through Clare-market, to his lodgings in Duke Street, overladen

with wine, he fell down on the ground as some say, according to others on a bulk, and was killed or stifled in the snow,* early in the year 1692.* The comic Etheredge also outlived the deposition of his patron James II., but is not known to have written anything after that event; he followed James to France, and is reported to have died characteristically at Ratisbon a year or two after: "having treated some company with a liberal entertainment at his house there, where he had taken his glass too freely, and being, through his great complaisance, too forward in waiting on his guests at their departure, flushed as he was, he tumbled down stairs and broke his neck, and so fell a martyr to jollity and civility."† Wycherley, who at the date of the Revolution was under fifty, lived to become a correspondent of Pope, and even saw out the reign of Anne; but he produced nothing in that of William, although he published a volume of poems in 1704, and left some other trifles behind him, which were printed long afterwards by Theobald. Southerne, indeed, who survived till 1746, continued to write and publish till within twenty years of his death; his two best dramas—his *Fatal Marriage* and his *Oroonoko*—were both produced in the reign of William. Southerne, though not without

* MS. note by Oldys, quoted in *Biog. Dram.* It was not known whether his death happened in this or the preceding year, till Mr. Peter Cunningham ascertained from the *Burial Register* that he was buried in the churchyard of St. Clement Danes on the 6th of April, 1692.—See *Campbell's Specimens of the British Poets*, edit. of 1844, p. 301.

† *Biog. Dram.*, on authority of *Biog. Brit.*, the writer in which says that he received this account from John Locker, Esq.

considerable pathetic power, was fortunate in a genius on the whole not above the appreciation of the unpoetical age he lived in: "Dryden once took occasion to ask him how much he got by one of his plays; to which he answered that he was really ashamed to inform him. But, Mr. Dryden being a little importunate to know, he plainly told him that by his last play he cleared seven hundred pounds, which appeared astonishing to Dryden, as he himself had never been able to acquire more than one hundred by his most successful pieces."* Southerne, who, whatever estimate may be formed of his poetry, was not, we may gather from this anecdote, without some conscience and modesty, had worse writers than himself to keep him in countenance by their preposterous prosperity, in this lucky time for mediocrity and dulness. Shadwell was King William's first poet-laureate, and Nahum Tate his next. Tate, indeed, and his friend Dr. Nicholas Brady, were among the most flourishing authors and greatest public favourites of this reign: it was now that they perpetrated in concert their version, or perversion, of the Psalms, with which we are still afflicted. Brady also published a play, and, at a later date, some volumes of sermons and a translation of the *Æneid*, which, fortunately, not having been imposed or recommended by authority, are all among the most forgotten of books. Elkanah Settle, too, was provided for as city poet. Among writers of another class, perhaps the most eminent who, having been distinguished before the Revolution, survived and continued to write after that event, was Sir William Temple. His *Miscellanies*, by which he is principally known, though partly composed

* Biog. Dram.

before, were not published till then. John Evelyn, who, however, although a very miscellaneous as well as voluminous writer, has hardly left any work that is held in esteem for either style or thought, or for anything save what it may contain of positive information or mere matter of fact, also published one or two books in the reign of William, which he saw to an end; for he died at the age of eighty-five, in 1706. Bishop Stillingfleet, who had been known as an author since before the Restoration, for his *Irenicum* appeared in 1659, when he was only in his twenty-fourth year, and who had kept the press in employment by a rapid succession of publications during the next five-and-twenty years, resumed his pen after the Revolution, which raised him to the bench, to engage in a controversy with Locke about some of the principles of his famous essay; but, whether it was that years had abated his powers, or that he had a worse cause to defend, or merely that the public taste was changed, he gained much less applause for his dialectic skill on this than on most former occasions. Stillingfleet lived to the year 1699. Two other eminent theological writers of this reign, Cumberland and Bull, who both eventually became bishops, had also first acquired distinction in the preceding period. Cumberland's principal work is his Latin treatise *De Legibus Naturæ*, an attack of considerable acuteness on the philosophy of Hobbes; Bull, who is also the author of some sermons in English, is most celebrated for his *Harmonia Apostolica*, directed against Calvinism, 1669; his *Defensio Fidei Nicenæ*, 1685; and his *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ*, 1694; all in Latin. John Norris, also, one of the last of the school of English Platonists, which may be

considered as having been founded in the latter part of the seventeenth century by Cudworth and Henry More, had, we believe, become known as a writer some years before the Revolution; but the greater number of his publications first appeared in the reign of William, and he may be reckoned one of the best writers properly or principally belonging to that reign. Yet he is not for a moment to be compared for learning, compass of thought, or power and skill of expression, to either Cudworth or More. Norris's principal work is his *Essay on the Ideal World*, published in two parts in 1701 and 1702. He is also the author of a volume of religious poetry, of rather a feeble character, which has been often reprinted. Bishop Spratt, though a clergyman, and a writer both of prose and verse, cannot be called a divine; he had in earlier life the reputation of being the finest writer of the day, but, although he lived till very nearly the end of the reign of Anne, he published nothing, we believe, after the Revolution, nor indeed for a good many years before it. His style, which was so much admired in his own age, is a Frenchified English, with an air of ease and occasionally of vivacity, but without any true grace or expressiveness. Good old Richard Baxter, who had been filling the world with books for half a century, just lived to see the Revolution. He died, at the age of seventy-six, in the beginning of December, 1691. And in the end of the same month died, a somewhat younger man, Robert Boyle, another of the most voluminous writers of the preceding period, and famous also for his services in the cause of religion, as well as of science. In the preceding May, at a still less advanced age, had died the most eminent Scotch writer of the period be-

tween the Restoration and the Revolution, Sir George Mackenzie, lord-advocate under both Charles II. and his successor; the author of the *Institutions of the Laws of Scotland*, and many other professional, historical, and antiquarian works, but the master also of a flowing pen in moral speculation, the belles lettres, and even in the department of fancy and fiction—as may be gathered from the titles of his *Arctina*, or the *Serious Romance*, 1660; *Religio Stoici*, or the *Virtuoso*, 1663; *Solitude preferred to Public Employment*, 1665; *Moral Gallantry*, 1667. Mackenzie may be regarded as the first successor of his countryman Drummond of Hawthornden in the cultivation of an English style; he was the correspondent of Dryden and other distinguished English writers of his day; but he has no pretensions of his own to any high rank either for the graces of expression or the value of his matter. Whatever may have been his professional learning, too, his historical disquisitions are as jejune and uncritical as his attempts at fine writing are, with all their elaboration, at once pedantic and clownish. He has nothing either of the poetry or the elegance of Drummond.

BISHOP BURNET.

The most active and conspicuous undoubtedly of the prose writers, who, having acquired distinction in the preceding period, continued to prosecute the business of authorship after the Revolution, was the celebrated Dr. Gilbert Burnet, now Bishop of Salisbury. Of 145 distinct publications (many of them, however, only single sermons and other short pamphlets), which are enumerated as having proceeded from his incessant pen betwe

1669 and his death, at the age of seventy-two, in 1715 (including, indeed, his *History of his Own Time*, and his *Thoughts on Education*, which did not appear till after his death), we find that 71, namely 21 historical works and 50 sermons and tracts, belong to the period before the Revolution; 36, namely 5 historical works and 31 sermons and tracts, to the reign of William; and the remaining 38, namely one historical work and 37 pamphlets, to a later date.* Many of what we have called historical works, however, are mere pamphlets: in fact Burnet's literary performances of any considerable extent are only three in number:—his *Memoirs of James and William, Dukes of Hamilton*, published, in one volume folio, in 1676; his *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 3 volumes folio, 1679, 1681, and 1714; and his *History of his Own Time*, in two volumes folio, published after his death in 1723 and 1734. There is enough of literary labour, as well as of historical value, in these works to preserve to the author a very honourable name; each of them contains much matter now nowhere else to be found, and they must always continue to rank among the original sources of our national history, both ecclesiastical and civil. In regard to their execution, too, it must be admitted that the style is at least straight-forward and unaffected, and generally as unambiguous as it is unambitious; the facts are clearly enough arranged; and the story is told not only intelligibly, but for the most part in rather a lively and interesting way. On the other hand, to any high station as a writer Burnet

* We have, for convenience of classification, reckoned each of the three volumes of the *History of the Reformation* a distinct publication.

can make no claim ; he is an industrious collector of intelligence, and a loquacious and moderately lively gossip ; but of eloquence, or grace, or refinement of any sort, he is as destitute as he is (and that is altogether) of imagination, and wit, and humour, and subtlety, and depth and weight of thought, and whatever other qualities give anything either of life or lustre to what a man utters out of his own head or heart. We read him for the sake of his facts only ; he troubles us with but few reflections, but of that no reader will complain. He does not see far into anything, nor indeed, properly speaking, into it at all ; for that matter he is little more, to adopt a modern term, than a penny-a-liner on a large scale, and best performs his task when he does not attempt to be anything else. Nor is he a neat-handed workman even of that class ; in his *History of his Own Time*, in particular, his style, with no strength, or flavour, or natural charm of any kind, to redeem its rudeness, is the most slovenly undress in which a writer ever wrapt up what he had to communicate to the public. Its only merit, as we have observed, is that it is without any air of pretension, and that it is evidently as extemporaneous and careless as it is unelevated, shapeless, and ungrammatical. Among the most important and best known of Burnet's other works are, that entitled '*Some Passages of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*,' 1680 ; his *Life of Bishop Bedel*, 1685 ; his *Travels through France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland*, 1685 ; and his *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 1699.

THOMAS BURNET.

In the same year with Bishop Burnet, but at a more advanced age, died Dr. Thomas Burnet, the learned and eloquent author of the *Telluris Sacra Theoria*, first published in Latin in 1680, and afterwards translated into English by the author; of the *Archæologia Philosophica*, published in 1692; and of two or three other treatises, also in Latin, which did not appear till after his death. Burnet's system of geology has no scientific value whatever; indeed, it must be considered as a mere romance, although, from the earnestness of the author's manner and his constant citation of texts of Scripture in support of his positions, as well as from more than one answer which he afterwards published to the attacks made upon his book, it is evident that he by no means intended it to be so received. But, with his genius and imagination and consummate scholarship, he is a very different species of writer from his garrulous and mitred namesake: his English style is singularly flowing and harmonious, as well as perspicuous and animated, and rises on fit occasions to much majesty and even splendour. We will transcribe a portion of the concluding Chapter of the Third Book of the Sacred Theory of the Earth, entitled 'An Imperfect description of the Coming of our Saviour, and of the World on Fire:—

Certainly there is nothing in the whole course of nature, or of human affairs, so great and so extraordinary as the two last scenes of them, The Coming of our Saviour, and the Burning of the World. If we could draw in our minds the pictures of these in true and lively colours, we should scarce be able to attend any thing else, or ever divert our imagination from these two objects: for what can more affect us than the greatest

glory that ever was visible upon earth, and at the same time the greatest terror ;—a God descending at the head of an array of Angels, and a burning World under his feet ?

As to the face of nature just before the coming of our Saviour, that may be best collected from the signs of his coming mentioned in the precedent chapter. Those, all meeting together, help to prepare and make ready a theatre fit for an angry God to come down upon. The countenance of the heavens will be dark and gloomy ; and a veil drawn over the face of the sun. The earth in a disposition every where to break into open flames. The tops of the mountains smoking ; the rivers dry ; earthquakes in several places ; the sea sunk and retired into its deepest channel, and roaring as against some mighty storm. These things will make the day dead and melancholy ; but the night scenes will have more of horror in them, when the blazing stars appear, like so many furies with their lighted torches, threatening to set all on fire. For I do not doubt but the comets will bear a part in this tragedy, and have something extraordinary in them at that time, either as to number or bigness, or nearness to the earth. Besides, the air will be full of flaming meteors, of unusual forms and magnitudes ; balls of fire rolling in the sky, and pointed lightnings darted against the earth, mixed with claps of thunder and unusual noises from the clouds. The moon and the stars will be confused and irregular, both in their light and motions ; as if the whole frame of the heavens was out of order, and all the laws of nature were broken or expired.

When all things are in this languishing or dying posture, and the inhabitants of the earth under the fears of their last end, the heavens will open on a sudden and the glory of God will appear. A glory surpassing the sun in its greatest radiancy ; which though we cannot describe, we may suppose it will bear some resemblance or proportion with those representations that are made in Scripture of God upon his throne. This wonder in the heavens, whatsoever its form may be, will presently

attract the eyes of all the Christian world. Nothing can more affect than an object so unusual and so illustrious, and that probably brings along with it their last destiny, and will put a period to all human affairs. . . .

As it is not possible for us to express or conceive the dread and majesty of his appearance, so neither can we, on the other hand, express the passions and consternation of the people that behold it. These things exceed the measures of human affairs, and of human thoughts: we have neither words nor comparisons to make them known by. The greatest pomp and magnificence of the Emperors of the East, in their armies, in their triumphs, in their inaugurations, is but the sport and entertainment of children, if compared with this solemnity. When God condescends to an external glory, with a visible train and equipage; when, from all the provinces of his vast and boundless empire, he summons his nobles, as I may so say—the several orders of angels and archangels—to attend his person, though we cannot tell the form or manner of his appearance, we know there is nothing in our experience, or in the whole history of this world, that can be a just representation of the least part of it. No armies so numerous as the host of Heaven; and, instead of the wild noises of the rabble, which makes a great part of our worldly state, this blessed company will breathe their hallelujahs into the open air, and repeated acclamations of salvation to God, which sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb.

Imagine all Nature now standing in a silent expectation to receive its last doom; the tutelary and destroying angels to have their instructions; every thing to be ready for the fatal hour; and then, after a little silence, all the host of heaven to raise their voice, and sing aloud: Let God arise; let his enemies be scattered; as smoke is driven away, so drive them away; As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. And upon this, as upon a signal given, all the sublunary world breaks into flames, and all the treasures of fire are opened in heaven and in earth.

Thus the conflagration begins. If one should now

go about to represent the world on fire, with all the confusions that necessarily must be in nature and in mankind upon that occasion, it would seem to most men a romantic scene. Yet we are sure there must be such a scene. The heavens will pass away with a noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and all the works of the earth will be burnt up; and these things cannot come to pass without the greatest disorders imaginable, both in the minds of man and in external nature, and the saddest spectacles that eye can behold. We think it a great matter to see a single person burnt alive; here are millions shrieking in the flames at once. It is frightful to us to look upon a great city in flames, and to see the distractions and misery of the people; here is an universal fire through all the cities of the earth, and an universal massacre of their inhabitants. Whatsoever the prophets foretold of the desolations of Judea, Jerusalem, or Babylon, in the highest strains, is more than literally accomplished in this last and general calamity; and those only that are spectators of it can make its history.

The disorders in nature and the inanimate world will be no less, nor less strange and unaccountable, than those in mankind. Every element, and every region, so far as the bounds of this fire extend, will be in a tumult and a fury, and the whole habitable world running into confusion. A world is sooner destroyed than made; and nature relapses hastily into that chaos state out of which she came by slow and leisurely motions: as an army advances into the field by just and regular marches; but, when it is broken and routed, it flies with precipitation, and one cannot describe its posture. Fire is a barbarous enemy; it gives no mercy; there is nothing but fury, and rage, and ruin, and destruction wheresoever it prevails. A storm, or hurricane, though it be but the force of air, makes a strange havoc where it comes; but devouring flames, or exhalations set on fire, have still a far greater violence, and carry more terror along with them. Thunder and earthquakes are the sons of fire; and we know nothing in all nature more impetuous or more irresistibly destruc-

tive than these two. And, accordingly, in this last war of the elements, we may be sure they will bear their parts, and do great execution in the several regions of the world. Earthquakes and subterraneous eruptions will tear the body and bowels of the earth; and thunders and convulsive motions of the air rend the skies. The waters of the sea will boil and struggle with streams of sulphur that run into them; which will make them fume, and smoke, and roar, beyond all storms and tempests; and those noises of the sea will be answered again from the land by falling rocks and mountains. This is a small part of the disorders of that day.

But if we suppose the storm over, and that the fire hath got an entire victory over all other bodies, and hath subdued every thing to itself, the conflagration will end in a deluge of fire, or in a sea of fire, covering the whole globe of the earth; for, when the exterior region of the earth is melted into a fluor, like molten glass or running metal, it will, according to the nature of other fluids, fill all vacuities and depressions, and fall into a regular surface, at an equal distance every where from its centre. This sea of fire, like the first abyss, will cover the face of the whole earth, make a kind of second chaos, and leave a capacity for another world to rise from it. But that is not our present business. Let us only, if you please, to take leave of this subject, reflect, upon this occasion, on the vanity and transient glory of all this habitable world; how, by the force of one element breaking loose upon the rest, all the varieties of nature, all the works of art, all the labours of men, are reduced to nothing; all that we admired and adored before as great and magnificent is obliterated or banished; and another form and face of things, plain, simple, and every where the same, overspreads the whole earth. Where are now the great empires of the world, and their great imperial cities? Their pillars, trophies, and monuments of glory? Show me where they stood; read the inscription; tell me the victor's name. What remains, what impressions, what difference or distinction, do you in this mass of fire? Rome itself, eternal Rome, the

great city, the Empress of the world, whose domination and superstition, ancient and modern, make a great part of the history of this earth, what is become of her now ? She laid her foundations deep, and her palaces were strong and sumptuous ; she glorified herself and lived deliciously, and said in her heart, I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow. But her hour is come, she is wiped away from the face of the earth, and buried in perpetual oblivion. But it is not cities only, and works of men's hands, but the everlasting hills and mountains and rocks of the earth are melted as wax before the sun ; and their place is nowhere found. Here stood the Alps, a prodigious range of stone, the load of the earth, that covered many countries, and reached their arms from the ocean to the Black Sea : this huge mass of stone is softened and dissolved, as a tender cloud into rain. Here stood the African mountains, and Atlas with his top above the clouds. There was frozen Caucasus, and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of Asia. And yonder, towards the north, stood the Rhiphaean Hills, clothed in ice and snow. All these are vanished, dropt away as the snow upon their heads, and swallowed up in a red sea of fire. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints ! Hallelujah.

OTHER THEOLOGICAL WRITERS :—TILLOTSON ; SOUTH.

Another name that may be here mentioned is that of Archbishop Tillotson, who was a very popular preacher among the Presbyterians before the Restoration, and began publishing sermons so early as in the year 1661, while he still belonged to that sect. He died in 1694, in his sixty-fourth year. Tillotson's Sermons, still familiarly known by reputation, long continued to be the most generally esteemed collection of such compositions in the language ; but are probably now very little read. They are substantial performances, such as make the reader feel, when he has got through one of them, that

he has accomplished something of a feat; and, being withal as free from pedantry and every other kind of eccentricity or extravagance as from flimsiness, and exceedingly sober in their strain of doctrine, with a certain blunt cordiality in the expression and manner, they were in all respects very happily addressed to the ordinary peculiarities of the national mind and character. But, having once fallen into neglect, Tillotson's writings have no qualities that will ever revive attention to them. There is much more of a true vitality in the sermons of Dr. Robert South, whose career of authorship commenced in the time of the Protectorate, though his life was extended till after the accession of George I. He died in 1716, at the age of eighty-three. South's sermons, the first of which date even before the earliest of Tillotson's, and the last after Tillotson's latest, are very well characterised by Mr. Hallam:—"They were," he observes, "much celebrated at the time, and retain a portion of their renown. This is by no means surprising. South had great qualifications for that popularity which attends the pulpit, and his manner was at that time original. Not diffuse, not learned, not formal in argument like Barrow, with a more natural structure of sentences, a more pointed though by no means a more fair and satisfactory turn of reasoning, with a style clear and English, free from all pedantry, but abounding with those colloquial novelties of idiom, which, though now become vulgar and offensive, the age of Charles II. affected, sparing no personal or temporary sarcasm, but, if he seems for a moment to tread on the verge of buffoonery, recovering himself by some stroke of vigorous sense and language; such was the worthy Dr. South,

whom the courtiers delighted to hear. His sermons want all that is called unction, and sometimes even earnestness; but there is a masculine spirit about them, which, combined with their peculiar characteristics, would naturally fill the churches where he might be heard.”* Both South and Tillotson are considered to belong as divines to the Arminian, or, as it was then commonly called, the Latitudinarian school—as well as Cudworth, More, and Stillingfleet.

A few paragraphs from one of his discourses against long and extempore prayers, on *Ecclesiastes* v. 2, “Be not rash with thy mouth,” &c., will exemplify his lively and pregnant style of preaching:—

And, thus having shown how the Almighty utters himself when he speaks, and that upon the greatest occasions, let us now descend from heaven to earth, from God to man, and show that it is no presumption for us to conform our words, as well as our actions, to the supreme pattern; and, according to our poor measures, to imitate the wisdom that we adore. And for this, has it not been noted by the best observers and the ablest judges, both of things and persons, that the wisdom of any people or nation has been most seen in the proverbs and short sayings commonly received amongst them? And what is a proverb, but the experience and observation of several ages, gathered and summed up into one expression? The Scripture vouches Solomon for the wisest of men; and they are his Proverbs that prove him so. The seven wise men of Greece, so famous for their wisdom all the world over, acquired all that fame, each of them by a single sentence consisting of two or three words; and γνῶθι σεαυτὸν (Know thyself) still lives and flourishes in the mouths of all, while many vast volumes are extinct, and sunk into dust and utter oblivion. And then, for books: we shall generally find that the most excellent,

in any art or science, have been still the smallest and most compendious : and this not without ground ; for it is an argument that the author was a master of what he wrote, and had a clear notion and a full comprehension of the subject before him. For the reason of things lies in a little compass, if the mind could at any time be so happy as to light upon it. Most of the writings and discourses in the world are but illustration and rhetoric, which signifies as much as nothing to a mind eager in pursuit after the causes and philosophical truth of things. It is the work of fancy to enlarge, but of judgment to shorten and contract ; and therefore this must needs be as far above the other as judgment is a greater and a nobler faculty than fancy or imagination. All philosophy is reduced to a few principles, and those principles comprised in a few propositions. And, as the whole structure of speculation rests upon three or four axioms or maxims, so that of practice also bears upon a very small number of rules. And surely there was never yet any rule or maxim that filled a volume, or took up a week's time to be got by heart. No, these are the *apices rerum*, the tops and sums, the very spirit and life of things extracted and abridged ; just as all the lines drawn from the vastest circumference do at length meet and unite in the smallest of things, a point : and it is but a very little piece of wood with which a true artist will measure all the timber in the world. The truth is, there could be no such thing as art or science, could not the mind of man gather the general natures of things out of the numberless heap of particulars, and then bind them up into such short aphorisms or propositions, that so they may be made portable to the memory, and thereby become ready or at hand for the judgment to apply and make use of, as there shall be occasion.

In fine, brevity and succinctness of speech is that which, in philosophy or speculation, we call *maxim*, and first principle ; in the counsels and resolves of practical wisdom, and the deep mysteries of religion, *oracle* ; and lastly, in matters of wit, and the finenesses of imagination, *epigram*. All of them, severally and in their kinds,

the greatest and the noblest things that the mind of man can show the force and dexterity of its faculties in.

And now, if this be the highest excellency and perfection of speech in all other things, can we assign any true, solid reason why it should not be so likewise in prayer? Nay, is there not rather the clearest reason imaginable why it should be much more so; since most of the forementioned things are but addresses to an human understanding, which may need as many words as may fill a volume to make it understand the truth of one line? Whereas prayer is an address to that Eternal Mind, which, as we have shown before, such as rationally invoke pretend not to inform. Nevertheless, since the nature of man is such that, while we are yet in the body, our reverence and worship of God must of necessity proceed in some analogy to the reverence that we show to the grandees of this world, we will here see what the judgment of all wise men is concerning fewness of words when we appear as suppliants before our earthly superiors; and we shall find that they generally allow it to import these three things: 1, Modesty; 2, Discretion; and 3, Height of respect to the person addressed to. And first, for modesty. Modesty is a kind of shame or bashfulness, proceeding from the sense a man has of his own defects, compared with the perfections of him whom he comes before. And that which is modesty towards man is worship and devotion towards God. It is a virtue that makes a man unwilling to be seen, and fearful to be heard; and yet, for that very cause, never fails to make him both seen with favour and heard with attention. It loves not many words, nor indeed needs them. For modesty, addressing to any one of a generous worth and honour, is sure to have that man's honour for its advocate and his generosity for its intercessor. And how, then, is it possible for such a virtue to run out into words? Loquacity storms the ear, but modesty takes the heart; that is troublesome, this gentle but irresistible. Much speaking is always the effect of confidence; and confidence still presupposes, and springs from, the persuasive

that a man has of his own worth : both of them, certainly, very unfit qualifications for a petitioner.

Secondly. The second thing that naturally shows itself in paucity of words is discretion ; and particularly that prime and eminent part of it that consists in a care of offending, which Solomon assures us that in much speaking it is hardly possible for us to avoid. In Prov. x. 19, *In the multitude of words, says he, there wanteth not sin.* It requires no ordinary skill for a man to make his tongue run by rule, and at the same time to give it both its lesson and its liberty too. For seldom or never is there much spoke, but something or other had better been not spoke, there being nothing that the mind of man is so apt to kindle and take distaste at as at words ; and, therefore, whensoever any one comes to prefer a suit to another, no doubt the fewer of them the better, since, where so very little is said, it is sure to be either candidly accepted, or, which is next, easily excused ; but at the same time to petition and to provoke too is certainly very preposterous.

Thirdly. The third thing that brevity of speech commends itself by in all petitioning addresses is, a peculiar respect to the person addressed to ; for whosoever petitions his superior in such a manner does, by his very so doing, confess him better able to understand, than he himself can be to express, his own case. He owns him as a patron of a preventing judgment and goodness, and, upon that account, able not only to answer but also to anticipate his requests. For, according to the most natural interpretation of things, this is to ascribe to him a sagacity so quick and piercing that it were presumption to inform, and a benignity so great that it were needless to importune, him. And can there be a greater and more winning deference to a superior than to treat him under such a character ? Or can anything be imagined so naturally fit and efficacious, both to enforce the petition and to endear the petitioner ? A short petition to a great man is not only a suit to him for his favour, but also a panegyric upon his parts.

Here we have, if not much subtlety, depth, or largeness of view, what is better fitted to win acceptance with the common taste, and especially to prove effective in spoken eloquence, pith and point, and a vein of reasoning or remark certainly not common-place, yet at the same time approving itself, so far as it goes, to every man's experience or consciousness, and alarming no prejudices by any tincture either of extravagance or novelty. It is a striking without being in any respect a startling style, whether we regard the thought or the expression; a manner of disquisition which never goes mining far underground for hidden treasure, yet stirs the surface of the soil so as effectually to bring out whatever fertility may be there resident. There is no passion or poetry in South's eloquence; its chief seasoning rather partakes of the nature of wit. Many smart sayings, having that peculiar species of truth in them which belongs to a witicism, might be gathered from his writings; and some current *bons mots* may probably be traced to him. The sarcastic definition, for instance, which has been given of gratitude, that it is a sense of obligation for favours expected, seems to be originally his. We are told by the author of the *Memoirs of his Life* prefixed to his *Sermons*, that, when Dr. Owen, the puritanical vice-chancellor, in the time of the Commonwealth, threatened to expel South, then an under-graduate, from Cambridge, on his being caught performing worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, remarking that "he could do no less, in gratitude to his highness the Protector, and his other great friends, who had thought him worthy of the dignities he then stood possessed of," the future champion of the restored Church of England replied

"Gratitude among friends is like credit amongst tradesmen; it keeps business up, and maintains the correspondence: and we pay, not so much out of a principle that we ought to discharge our debts, as to secure ourselves a place to be trusted another time." The buffoonery, or something like it, occasionally to be found in his sermons is principally directed against the sectaries; for South, although not given to take up with any creed or system on the mere ground of authority, was, as we have just said, a strict and strenuous adherent of the Establishment, and had convinced himself that there was no good to be found either to the right or the left of the Thirty-nine Articles, either in Romanism on the one hand or Protestant dissent on the other. It is true that when at college, in 1655, he had gone so far as to contribute a copy of Latin verses to the volume published by the university in congratulation of Cromwell on the peace conquered by him that year from the Dutch; and this circumstance considerably annoys his orthodox and loyal biographer. Upon the said poem, it is remarked, "some people have made invidious reflections, as if contrary to the sentiments he afterwards espoused; but these are to be told that such exercises are usually imposed by the governors of colleges upon bachelors of arts and under-graduates: I shall forbear to be particular in his, as being a forced compliment to the usurper. Not but even those discover a certain unwillingness to set in favour of that monster, whom even the inimitable Earl of Clarendon, in his History of the Grand Rebellion, distinguishes by the name and title of a Glorious Villain." As a further sample of the principles and temper of this biographer, we may just notice that a little lower down, in mentioning the

learned Dr. John Owen, he designates him, "this man (if he deserves the name of one)," and all his party as "creatures divested of all qualities that point towards the least symptoms of humanity." In South himself the feeling of aversion to the sectarianism and republicanism that had for the present been shuffled out of sight, or out of the way, never took this bitter tone. His way of viewing the matter may be exemplified by a famous passage from a sermon which he preached, as one of the chaplains in ordinary, before Charles II. in 1681:—"Who that had looked upon Agathocles, first handling the clay, and making pots under his father, and afterwards turning robber, could have thought that, from such a condition, he should come to be king of Sicily? Who that had seen Masaniello, a poor fisherman, with his red cap and his angle, would have reckoned it possible to see such a pitiful thing, within a week after, shining in his cloth of gold, and with a word or a nod absolutely commanding the whole city of Naples? And who that had beheld such a bankrupt, beggarly fellow as Cromwell, first entering the Parliament House, with a threadbare, torn cloak, greasy hat (perhaps neither of them paid for), could have suspected that, in the space of so few years, he should, by the murder of one king and the banishment of another, ascend the throne?" There is contempt and abuse here, but not any malignity. At this sally, we are told, Charles fell into a violent fit of laughter, and, turning round to Lord Rochester, said, "Ods fish, Lory, your chaplain must be a bishop: put me in mind of him at the next death." But, however much South may have enjoyed thus setting the Chapel Royal in a roar, he was not fishing for a bishopric with his comic pulpit ora-

tory. He had it several times in his power, after this, to take his seat upon the right reverend bench, but he always declined that distinction; and, although he was perhaps the most influential English ecclesiastic of his day, he continued to the end of his life nothing more than prebendary of Westminster and canon of Christ Church, Oxford. In all other worldly matters, indeed, he showed the same disinterestedness, so worthy of him both as a Christian and as a wit.

LOCKE.

The only considerable literary name that belongs exclusively, or almost exclusively, to the first reign after the Revolution is that of Locke. John Locke, born in 1632, although his '*Adversariorum Methodus, or New Method of a Common-Place-Book*,' had appeared in French in Leclerc's '*Bibliothèque*' for 1686, and an abridgment of his celebrated Essay, and his first Letter on Toleration, both also in French, in the same publication for 1687 and 1688, had published nothing in English, or with his name, till he produced in 1690 the work which has ever since made him one of the best known of English writers, both in his own and in other countries, his '*Essay concerning Human Understanding*.' This was followed by his Second Letter on Toleration, and his two Treatises on Government, in the same year; his Considerations on Lowering the Interest of Money, in 1691; his Third Letter on Toleration, in 1692; his Thoughts concerning Education, in 1693; his Reasonableness of Christianity, in 1695; and various controversial tracts in reply to his assailants, Dr. Edwards and Bishop Stillingfleet, between that date and his death in 1704. After his death appeared his

Conduct of the Understanding, and several theological treatises, the composition of which had been the employment of the last years of his industrious and productive old age. Locke's famous Essay was the first work, perhaps in any language, which professedly or systematically attempted to popularise metaphysical philosophy. The author's persuasion evidently is, that there is nothing more difficult to comprehend, or at least more incomprehensible, about the operations of the human mind than there is in the movements of an eight-day clock. What he especially sets himself to run down and do away with, from the beginning to the end of his book, is the notion that there is any mystery in any part of the subject he has undertaken to expound which his pen cannot make clear to the most ordinary capacity that will lend him half an hour's fair attention. Locke was a man of great moral worth, of the highest integrity, disinterested, just, tolerant, and humane, as well as of extraordinary penetration and capacity; moreover, he was probably as free from anything like self-conceit, or the over-estimation either of his own virtues or his own talents, as people of good sense usually are; and he had undoubtedly a great respect for the deity, as the First Magistrate of the universe; yet, to a mind differently constituted from his, and which, instead of seeing a mystery in nothing, sees a mystery in all things, there is, it must be confessed, something so offensive in the whole tone and manner of his speculations, that his real merits perhaps will scarcely be rated by such a mind so high as they deserve. It seems all like a man, if not trying to deceive others, at least so perseveringly shutting his eyes upon, and turning away his head from, every real difficulty, that he

may be almost said to be wilfully deceiving himself; merely skimming the surface of his subject while he assumes the air of exploring it to the bottom; repelling objections sometimes by dexterously thrusting them aside, mostly by not noticing them at all; in other words, a piece of mere clever and plausible, but hollow and insincere, conjuring; a vain show of wisdom, having in it almost as little of the real as of the reverential. No awe, no wonder, no self-distrust—no sense of anything above—we might almost say beside, or out of—the intellect of the speculator. Malebranche saw all things in God; Locke saw all things in himself. Nay, he went all but the length of seeing the whole universe in his five corporeal senses; and the majority of his disciples in more recent times have boldly leaped across the slight barrier which kept their master back from that great discovery. But, while there will continue to be in many minds this dissent from the general spirit of Locke's philosophy, and also from the general tenor of his conclusions, the *Essay on Human Understanding* will, nevertheless, always be recognised as not only an illustrious monument of the penetration, ingenuity, and other high mental powers and resources of its author, but as a fundamental book in modern metaphysics. It is, as has been remarked, the first comprehensive survey that had been attempted of the whole mind and its faculties; and the very conception of such a design argued an intellect of no common reach, originality, and boldness. It will remain also of very considerable value as an extensive register of facts, and a storehouse of acute and often suggestive observations on psychological phenomena, whatever may be the fate of the views propounded in it

as a metaphysical system. Further, it is not to be denied that this work has exercised a powerful influence upon the course of philosophical inquiry and opinion ever since its appearance. At first, in particular, it did good service in putting finally to the rout some fantastic notions and methods that still lingered in the schools; it was the loudest and most comprehensive proclamation that had yet been made of the liberation of philosophy from the dominion of authority; but Locke's was a mind stronger and better furnished for the work of pulling down than of building up; he had enough of clear-sightedness and independence of mental character for the one; whatever endowments of a different kind he possessed, he had too little imagination, or creative power, for the other. Besides, the very passionless character of his mind would have unfitted him for going far into the philosophy of our complex nature, in which the passions are the revealers and teachers of all the deepest truths, and alone afford us any intimation of many things which, even with the aid of their lurid light, we discern but as fearful and unfathomable mysteries. What would Shakspeare's understanding of the philosophy of human nature have been, if he had had no more imagination and passion in his own nature than Locke?

WRITERS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY.

Among Locke's writings are two treatises, the one entitled 'Considerations on the Lowering of Interest and Raising the Value of Money,' published in 1691, the other entitled 'Further Considerations on Raising the Value of Money,' published in 1695. Some of the most important questions in what is now called Political

Economy had been discussed in England in a popular fashion before the end of the sixteenth century; but it was only since the Revolution that attempts had been made to settle the general principles of the science of wealth or to give it a systematic form. Sir William Petty, Sir Josiah Child, and Mr. Thomas Mun had all written upon the subject of money before Locke, and both his publications and theirs contain many sound and valuable observations; but by far the most remarkable work belonging to this early era of the science is Sir Dudley North's 'Discourses on Trade, principally directed to the cases of Interest, Coinage, Clipping, and Increase of Money,' published in the same year with Locke's first tract, and with reference to the same matter, the general recoinage of the silver currency which was about this time first proposed by the government, and was accomplished five years afterwards. Sir Dudley's pamphlet was in opposition to a material point of the plan actually adopted, by which the loss arising from the clipped money was thrown upon the public, and the publication is supposed to have been suppressed; but a few years ago a distinguished living political economist (Mr. M'Culloch) was fortunate enough to recover a copy, then supposed to be the only one in existence.* Its leading principle is simply, that gold and silver differ commercially in no respect whatever from other commodities; and on this basis the author has reared a theory entirely unvitiated by the ancient and almost universally received errors and prejudices of his day, and, so far as

* In his 'Literature of Political Economy,' 8vo. Lond. 1845, p. 43, Mr. M'Culloch informs us that he has since met with two other copies of the original edition.

it goes, as perfect as the subject admits of. A more voluminous writer on commerce and finance in this and the next reign was Dr. Charles Davenant (son of Sir William, the poet), whose works, however, are more valuable for the mere facts they record than for any light they throw on the principles of economical science. Davenant, who held the office of Inspector-general of Exports and Imports, was a laborious examiner of documents and accounts, and a sensible man withal, but rather dull, it must be allowed, notwithstanding his poetical descent.

BOYLE AND BENTLEY CONTROVERSY.

In taking leave of the seventeenth century we must not omit noticing the memorable contest of wit and learning which arose, in the reign of William, out of the publication of an edition of the Greek Epistles attributed to Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum, in Sicily, famous for his brazen bull, by the Honourable Charles Boyle (afterwards Earl of Orrery). In the preface to his book, which was published in the beginning of the year 1695, Boyle, who was then an undergraduate of Christ Church, Oxford, animadverted with some severity upon a piece of discourtesy which he conceived he had met with from Dr. Bentley, then keeper of the King's Library, in regard to the loan of a manuscript of the Epistles there preserved. After an interval of two years Bentley published, in an appendix to the second edition of his friend William Wotton's 'Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning,' an elaborate exposition of his reasons for holding the compositions printed by Boyle, and ranked by him with the most precious remains of the

remotest antiquity, to be a comparatively modern forgery; and at the same time took an opportunity both of replying to the charge brought against him by Boyle (from which he appears to have vindicated himself), and of criticising the late edition of the *Epistles* with great severity, and with all the power of his vast erudition and unrivalled acumen. This, the first edition of Bentley's celebrated '*Dissertation on Phalaris*,' is now, in truth, universally considered to have established the spuriousness of the *Epistles* conclusively and unanswerably. An answer, however, was produced to it in the following year (1698), under the title of '*Dr. Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Æsop examined*;' to which Boyle's name was prefixed, but which is believed to have been chiefly the composition of his tutor, the celebrated Dr. Francis Atterbury, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, whose very considerable attainments in classical scholarship were enlivened and decorated by the finest spirit of wit and humour. Some others of the most distinguished among the Oxford men also contributed their blows or missiles; so that the cause of the old Sicilian tyrant against the denier and derider of his literary pretensions may be said to have been taken up and defended by the whole force and fury of the university. The laugh was turned for the moment against Bentley by this attack, which was for the most part a fierce personal invective; but he set at least the original question at rest, and effectually put down the pretensions of his assailants to cope with him in the field of learning and criticism, by a second and enlarged edition of his *Dissertation*, which he brought forth after about another year's interval. To this a reply was

threatened, but none was ever made. Bentley's performance was in every way a masterpiece. "Professedly controversial," observes a late writer, "it embodies a mass of accurate information relative to historical facts, antiquities, chronology, and philology, such as we may safely say has rarely been collected in the same space; and the reader cannot fail to admire the ingenuity with which things apparently trifling, or foreign to the point in question, are made effective in illustrating or proving the author's views. Nothing shows so well how thoroughly digested and familiar was the vast stock of reading which Bentley possessed. The banter and ridicule of his opponents are returned with interest, and the reader is reconciled to what might seem to savour too much of arrogance and the bitterness of controversy by a sense of the strong provocation given to the author."* We may add a few words from Mr. Hallam's notice of this controversy:—"It was the first great literary war that had been waged in England; and, like that of Troy, it has still the prerogative of being remembered after the Epistles of Phalaris are as much buried as the walls of Troy itself. Both combatants were skilful in wielding the sword: the arms of Boyle, in Swift's language, were given him by all the gods;† but his antagonist stood

* Article on Bentley, in Penny Cyclopædia, iv. 250.

† Upon this assertion of Swift's, Boyle's son, John earl of Orrery, remarks, with a filial or family partiality that is excusable enough—"I shall not dispute about the gift of the armour; but thus far I will venture to observe, that the gods never bestowed celestial armour except upon heroes whose courage and superior strength distinguished them from the rest of mankind; whose merits and abilities were already conspicuous; and who could wield, though young, the sword of Mars, and adorn it with all the virtues

forward in no such figurative strength; master of a learning to which nothing parallel had been known in England, and that directed by an understanding prompt, discriminating, not idly sceptical, but still farther removed from trust in authority, sagacious in perceiving corruptions of language, and ingenious, at the least, in removing them, with a style rapid, concise, amusing, and superior to Boyle in that which he had most to boast, a sarcastic wit."* The Battle of the Books, here alluded to, the production of the afterwards renowned Jonathan Swift, did not, however, appear till the year 1704. In fact the dispute about the authenticity of the Epistles of Phalaris had formed all along only a branch of a larger controversy, which was kept up for some years after the question of Phalaris had been set at rest and abandoned on all hands. It was Swift's relation and patron, Sir William Temple, who had first called attention to the Epistles by a passage in one of his Essays, in which he endeavoured to maintain the superiority of the ancients over the moderns in all kinds of learning and knowledge, the physical and experimental sciences themselves not excepted. It was in answer to Temple's Essay, which was itself a reply to Perrault's '*Parallèle des Anciens et Modernes*,' published at Paris in 1687, that Wotton wrote his '*Reflections*,' the first edition of which ap-

of Minerva."—*Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Swift*, 5th edition, p. 228. Charles Boyle was in truth a person of respectable talent; but, although in after life he wrote a comedy (*As You Find It*), and some other trifles, his wit does not appear to have ripened with his years, and nothing that he produced ever excited any attention except his college publication in the Phalaris controversy.

* '*Lit. of Eur.*' iv. 14.

peared in 1694, and expressed therein an opinion unfavourable to the antiquity of the Epistles, which Temple had both eulogised in warm terms and cited as of unquestionable authenticity. This argument between Temple as the champion-general of the ancients, and Wotton of the moderns, which produced a great many more publications from both, and from their respective partisans, is the main subject of the *Battle of the Books*, which was probably the last blow struck in the pen and ink war, and at any rate is the last that is now remembered.

SWIFT.

The *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books*, published together, were the first announcement of the greatest master of satire at once comic and caustic that has yet appeared in our language. Swift, born in Ireland in 1667, had already, in the last years of the reign of King William, made himself known by two volumes of *Letters* selected from the papers of his friend Temple, and also by a political pamphlet in favour of the ministry of the day, which attracted little notice, and gave as little promise of his future eminence as a writer. To politics as well as satire, however, he adhered throughout his career—often blending the two, but producing scarcely anything, if we may not except some of his effusions in verse, that was not either satirical or political. His course of authorship as a political writer may be considered properly to begin with his ‘*Letter concerning the Sacramental Test*,’ and another high Tory and high church tract, which he published in 1708; in which same year he also came forward with his ironical ‘*Argument for the Abolition of Christianity*,’ and, in his

humorous 'Predictions,' first assumed his *nom de guerre* of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, subsequently made so famous by other *jeux d'esprit* in the same style, and by its adoption soon after by the wits of the Tatler. Of his other most notable performances, his *Conduct of the Allies* was published in 1712; his *Public Spirit of the Whigs*, in 1714; his *Drapier's Letters*, in 1724; his immortal *Gulliver's Travels*, in 1727; and his *Polite Conversation*, which had been written many years before, in 1738. His poem of *Cadenus and Vanessa*, besides, had appeared, without his consent, in 1723, soon after the death of Miss Hester Van Homrigh, its heroine. The *History of the Four Last Years of Queen Anne* (if his, which there can hardly be a doubt that it is), the *Directions for Servants*, many of his verses and other shorter pieces, and his *Diary* written to Stella (Miss Johnson, whom he eventually married), were none of them printed till after, some of them not till long after, his death, which took place in 1745.

"O thou!" exclaims his friend Pope,

— "whatever title please thine ear
Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver!
Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,
Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair,
Or praise the court, or magnify mankind,
Or thy grieved country's copper chains unbind,—"

lines that describe comprehensively enough the celebrated dean's genius and writings—what he did and what he was. And the first remark to be made about Swift is, that into everything that came from his pen he put a strong infusion of himself; that in his writings we read the man—not merely his intellectual ability, but his moral nature, his passions, his principles, his prejudices, his

humours, his whole temper and individuality. The common herd of writers have no individuality at all; those of the very highest class can assume at will any other individuality as perfectly as their own—they have no exclusiveness. Next under this highest class stand those whose individuality is at once their strength and their weakness;—their strength, in as much as it distinguishes them from and lifts them far above the multitude of writers of mere talent or expository skill; their weakness and bondage, in that it will not be thrown off, and that it withholds them from ever going out of themselves, and rising from the merely characteristic, striking, or picturesque either to the dramatic or to the beautiful, of both of which equally the spirit is unegotistic and universal. To this class, which is not the highest, but the next to it, Swift belongs. The class, however, like both that which is above and that which is below it, is one of wide comprehension, and includes many degrees of power, and even many diversities of gifts. Swift was neither a Cervantes nor a Rabelais; but yet, with something that was peculiar to himself, he combined considerable portions of both. He had more of Cervantes than Rabelais had, and more of Rabelais than was given to Cervantes. There cannot be claimed for him the refinement, the humanity, the pathos, the noble elevation of the Spaniard—all that irradiates and beautifies his satire and drollery as the blue sky does the earth it bends over; neither, with all his ingenuity and fertility, does our English wit and humourist anywhere display either the same inexhaustible abundance of grotesque invention, or the same gaiety and luxuriance of fancy, with the historian of the Doings and Sayings of the Giant Gargantua

Yet neither Cervantes nor Rabelais, nor both combined, could have written the Tale of a Tub, or the Battle of the Books. The torrent of triumphant merriment is broader and more rushing than any thing of the same kind in either. When we look indeed to the perfection and exactness of the allegory at all points, to the biting sharpness and at the same time the hilarity and comic animation of the satire, to its strong and unpausing yet easy and natural flow, to the incessant blaze of the wit and humour, and to the style so clear, so vivid and expressive, so idiomatic, so English, so true in all its varieties, narrative, didactic, rhetorical, colloquial, as we know no work of its class in our own language that as a whole approaches the Tale of a Tub, so we doubt if there be another quite equal to it in any language. Even a few extracts may give some notion of its wonderful spirit and brilliancy. Passing over some preliminary matter—among other things the inimitable Dedication to Prince Posterity—we come in what is entitled Section Second to the proper commencement of the story, the deathbed bequest by the father to his three sons, all born at a birth, of a new coat each—the miraculous virtues of the garments being, that with good keeping they would last them fresh and sound as long as they lived, and that they would grow with the bodies of their wearers, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as always to fit. “Here,” said the father; “let me see them on you before I die. So; very well; pray, children, wear them clean, and brush them often. You will find in my will—here it is—full instructions in every particular concerning the wearing and management of your coats; wherein you must be very exact, to avoid the penalties

I have appointed for every transgression or neglect, upon which your future fortunes will entirely depend. I have also commanded in my will that you should live together in one house like brethren and friends, for then you will be sure to thrive, and not otherwise." The will here mentioned is the Bible. The three young men, after their father's death, go forth all together to seek their fortunes. "I shall not trouble you," says our author, "with recounting what adventures they met with for the first seven years, any further than by taking notice that they carefully observed their father's will, and kept their coats in very good order; that they travelled through several countries, encountered a reasonable quantity of giants, and slew certain dragons." And thus he dismisses the primitive ages of Christianity. "Being now, however, arrived at the proper age for producing themselves," he tells us, "they came up to town, and fell in love with the ladies"—among the rest, and especially, with the Duchess d'Argent (Covetousness), Madame de Grands Titres (Ambition), and the Countess d'Orgueil (Pride). We must refer the reader to the original for the account of the courses they took, with no effect, to gain the favour of these ladies—giving themselves for that purpose to the acquisition and practice of all the fashionable ways of the town; and also for the full exposition of the facetious and profound theory that follows on the subject of dress—that the universe is only a large suit of clothes, and that every part of nature, and man himself, is nothing more; so that, argues our author, "what the world calls improperly suits of clothes are in reality the most refined species of animals, or, to proceed higher, that they are rational creatures or m-- "

"Is it not they," he asks, "and they alone, who walk the streets?" "It is true, indeed," he adds, "that these animals, which are truly only called suits of clothes, or dresses, do, according to certain compositions, receive different appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a gold chain, and a red gown, and a white rod, and a great horse, it is called a lord mayor; if certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a judge; and so an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin we entitle a bishop." The devotees of dress are represented as a sect that had lately arisen, whose tenets had spread extensively in the great world, and whose supreme deity was a tailor. "They worshipped," we are told, "a sort of idol, who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufactory operation. This idol they placed in the highest part of the house, on an altar erected about three foot: he was shown in the posture of a Persian emperor, sitting on a superficies, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a goose for his ensign: whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from Jupiter Capitolinus. At his left hand, beneath the altar, hell seemed to open and catch at the animals the idol was creating; to prevent which, certain of his priests hourly flung in pieces of the uninformed mass, or substance, and sometimes whole limbs already enlivened, which that horrid gulf insatiably swallowed, terrible to behold." "To this system of religion," it is added, "were tagged several subaltern doctrines, which were entertained with great vogue; as particularly the faculties of the mind were deduced by the learned among them in this manner:—embroidery was sheer wit, gold fringe was agreeable

conversation, gold lace was repartee, a huge long periwig was humour, and a coat full of powder was very good raillery—all which required abundance of *finesse* and *delicatesse* to manage with advantage, as well as a strict observance of the times and fashions." And then the story proceeds as follows:—

These opinions therefore were so universal, as well as the practices of them, that our three brother adventurers, as their circumstances then stood, were strangely at a loss. For, on the one side, the three ladies they addressed themselves to, whom we have named already, were ever at the very top of the fashion, and abhorred all that were below it but the breadth of a hair. On the other side, their father's will was very precise; and it was the main precept in it, with the greatest penalties annexed, not to add to or diminish from their coats one thread, without a positive command in the will. Now the coats their father had left them were, it is true, of very good cloth, and besides so neatly sewn you would swear they were all of a piece; but at the same time very plain, and with little or no ornament; and it happened that before they were a month in town great shoulder-knots came up; straight all the world wore shoulder-knots—no approaching the ladies' *ruelles* without the *quota* of shoulder-knots. That fellow, cries one, has no soul; where is his shoulder-knot? Our three brethren soon discovered their want by sad experience, meeting in their walks with forty mortifications and indignities. If they went to the playhouse, the doorkeeper showed them into the twelvepenny gallery; if they called a boat, says a waterman, "I am first sculler;" if they stepped to the Rose to take a bottle, the drawer would cry, "Friend, we sell no ale;" if they went to visit a lady, a footman met them at the door with "Pray send up your message." In this unhappy case they went immediately to consult their father's will, read it over and over, but not a word of the shoulder-knot. What should

they do? What temper* should they find? Obedience was absolutely necessary, and yet shoulder-knots appeared extremely requisite. After much thought, one of the brothers, who happened to be more booklearned than the other two, said he had found an expedient. It is true, said he, there is nothing here in this will, *totidem verbis*,† making mention of shoulder-knots; but I dare conjecture we may find them *inclusive*,‡ or *totidem syllabis*.§ This distinction was immediately approved by all, and so they fell again to examine; but their evil star had so directed the matter that the first syllable was not to be found in the whole writings. Upon which disappointment, he who found the former evasion took heart, and said, “Brothers, there are yet hopes; for, though we cannot find them *totidem verbis*, nor *totidem syllabis*, I dare engage we shall make them out *tertio modo*,|| or *totidem literis*.”¶ This discovery was also highly commended, upon which they fell once more to the scrutiny, and soon picked out S, H, O, U, L, D, E, R; when the same planet, enemy to their repose, had wonderfully contrived that a K was not to be found. Here was a weighty difficulty! But the distinguishing brother, for whom we shall hereafter find a name, now his hand was in, proved by a very good argument that K was a modern, illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages, nor any where to be found in ancient manuscripts. It is true, said he, the word *Calendar* hath in Q. V. C.** been sometimes written with a K, but erroneously; for in the best copies it has been ever spelt with a C. And, by consequence, it was a gross mistake in our language to spell *knot* with a k; but that from henceforward he would take care it should be written with a C. Upon.

* Middle course.

† In so many words.

‡ Inclusively.

§ In so many syllables.

|| In the third mode or manner.

¶ In so many letters.

** Quibusdem veteribus codicibus (in some ancient manuscripts).

this all further difficulty vanished—shoulder-knots were made clearly out to be *jure paterno*,* and our three gentlemen swaggered with as large and as flaunting ones as the best. But, as human happiness is of a very short duration, so in those days were human fashions, upon which it entirely depends. Shoulder-knots had their time, and we must now imagine them in their decline; for a certain lord came just from Paris, with fifty yards of gold lace upon his coat, exactly trimmed after the court fashion of that month. In two days all mankind appeared closed up in bars of gold lace. What should our three knights do in this momentous affair? They had sufficiently strained a point already in the affair of shoulder-knots: upon recourse to the will, nothing appeared there but *altum silentium*.† That of the shoulder-knot was a loose, flying, circumstantial point; but this of gold lace seemed too considerable an alteration without better warrant; it did *aliquo modo essentia adherere*,‡ and therefore required a positive precept. But about this time it fell out that the learned brother aforesaid had read *Aristotelis Dialectica*,§ and especially that wonderful piece *De Interpretatione*,|| which has the faculty of teaching its readers to find out a meaning in every thing but itself; like commentators on the Revelations, who proceed prophets without understanding a syllable of the text. Brothers, said he, you are to be informed that of wills *duo sunt genera*,¶ nuncupatory and scriptory: that in the scriptory will here before us there is no precept or mention about gold lace, *conceditur*;** but, *si idem affirmetur de nuncupatorio, negatur*.†† For, brothers, if you remember, we heard a

* Conformable to paternal law.

† Deep silence.

‡ In some measure belong to the essence. These are all phrases of the schoolmen, whose endless distinctions and methods of reasoning are ridiculed.

§ Aristotle's Dialectics.

|| On Interpretation.

¶ There are two kinds.

** Is granted.

†† If the same thing be affirmed of the nuncupatory, it is

fellow say when we were boys that he heard my father's man say that he would advise his sons to get gold lace on their coats as soon as ever they could procure money to buy it. By G—! that is very true, cries the other: I remember it perfectly well, said the third. And so, without more ado, they got the largest gold lace in the parish, and walked about as fine as lords.

A while after there came up in fashion a pretty sort of flame-coloured satin for lining,* and the mercer brought a pattern of it immediately to our three gentlemen. "An' please your worships," said he, "my Lord Conway and Sir John Walters had linings out of this very piece last night: it takes wonderfully, and I shall not have a remnant left enough to make my wife a pincushion by to-morrow morning at ten o'clock." Upon this they fell again to rummage the will, because the present case also required a positive precept; the lining being held by orthodox writers to be of the essence of the coat. After a long search they could fix upon nothing to the matter in hand, except a short advice of their father in the will to take care of fire and put out their candles before they went to sleep.† This, though a good deal for the purpose, and helping very far towards self-conviction, yet not seeming wholly of force to establish a command (being resolved to avoid further scruple, as well as future occasion for scandal), says he that was the scholar, I remember to have read in wills of a codicil annexed, which is indeed a part of the will, and what it contains has equal authority with the rest. Now, I have been considering of this same will here before us, and I cannot reckon it to be complete for want of such a codicil: I will therefore fasten one in its proper place very dexterously. I have had it by me some time: it was written

denied. Of course, the nuncupatory will is the oral traditions of the Romish church.

* The fire of purgatory, and prayers for the dead.

† To subdue their lusts, that they might escape the fire of hell.

by a dog-keeper of my grandfather's,* and talks a great deal, as good luck would have it, of this very flame-coloured satin. The project was immediately approved by the other two; an old parchment scroll was tagged on according to art, in the form of a codicil annexed, and the satin bought and worn.

Next winter a player, hired for the purpose by the corporation of fringe-makers, acted his part in a new comedy, all covered with silver fringe, and, according to the laudable custom, gave rise to that fashion. Upon which the brothers, consulting their father's will, to their great astonishment, found these words: *Item*, I charge and command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats, &c., with a penalty, in case of disobedience, too long here to insert. However, after some pause, the brother so often mentioned for his erudition, who was well skilled in criticisms, had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless, that the same word which in the will is called fringe does also signify a broomstick, and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph. This another of the brothers disliked, because of that epithet silver, which could not, he humbly conceived, in propriety of speech, be reasonably applied to a broomstick: but it was replied upon him that this epithet was understood in a mythological and allegorical sense. However, he objected again why their father should forbid them to wear a broomstick on their coats, a caution that seemed unnatural and impertinent; upon which he was taken up short, as one that spoke irreverently of a mystery, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pried into or nicely reasoned upon. And, in short, their father's authority being now considerably sunk, this expedient was allowed to serve as a lawful dispensation for wearing their full proportion of silver fringe.

Awhile after was revived an old fashion, long antiquated, of embroidery with Indian figures of men,

* Pointed, apparently, at the Apocrypha.

women, and children.* Here they remembered but too well how their father had always abhorred this fashion ; that he made several paragraphs on purpose, importing his utter detestation of it, and bestowing his everlasting curse to his sons whenever they should wear it. For all this, in a few days they appeared higher in the fashion than any body else in the town. But they solved the matter by saying that these figures were not at all the same with those that were formerly worn and were meant in the will. Besides, they did not wear them in the sense as forbidden by their father, but as they were a commendable custom, and of great use to the public. That these rigorous clauses in the will did therefore require some allowance and a favourable interpretation, and ought to be understood *cum grano salis*.

But, fashions perpetually altering in that age, the scholastic brother grew weary of searching farther evasions and solving everlasting contradictions. Resolved, therefore, at all hazards to comply with the modes of the world, they concerted matters together, and agreed unanimously to lock up their father's will in a strong box, brought out of Greece or Italy, I have forgotten which, and trouble themselves no farther to examine it, but only refer to its authority whenever they thought fit ; † in consequence whereof, a while after it grew a general mode to wear an infinite number of points, most of them tagged with silver ; ‡ upon which the scholar pronounced, *ex cathedra*, § that points were absolutely *jure paterno*, as they might very well remember. It is true, indeed, the fashion prescribed somewhat more than were directly named in the will ; however, that they, as heirs general of their father, had power to make and add

* Images of saints.

† The prohibition of the use of the Scriptures, except in the Greek or Latin languages.

‡ Novel rites and doctrines, many of which were sources of pecuniary profit.

§ From the seat of authority, in allusion to the papal decrees and bulls.

certain clauses for public emolument, though not deducible *totidem verbis* from the letter of the will, or else *multa absurda sequerentur*.* This was understood for canonical, and therefore on the following Sunday they came to church all covered with points.

The learned brother, so often mentioned, was reckoned the best scholar in all that or the next street to it, insomuch as, having run something behindhand in the world, he obtained the favour of a certain lord† to receive him into his house, and to teach his children. A while after, the lord died; and he, by long practice upon his father's will, found the way of contriving a deed of conveyance of that house to himself and his heirs;‡ upon which he took possession, turned the young squires out, and received his brothers in their stead.

In all this the satire is as admirable for the fineness of its edge as for its force and liveliness; but in the sequel the drollery becomes still richer. The glory of the work undoubtedly is the fourth section, in which it is recounted how the learned brother, advanced in the world as we have seen, after a while would not allow the others to call him any longer brother, but Mr. Peter, and then Father Peter, and sometimes My Lord Peter; and what discoveries and inventions he fell upon to support his grandeur, including his purchase of a large continent in *terra australis incognita* (the other world), which (although its very existence was doubtful) he retailed in parcels to a continual succession of dealers and colonists, who were always shipwrecked in the voyage—his sovereign remedy for the worms (penance and fasting)—his whispering office (the confessional)—his office of insurance (indulgences)—his puppets and

* Many absurd consequences would follow.

† Constantine the Great.

‡ The temporal sovereignty claimed by the popes.

raree-shows (ceremonies and processions)—his famous universal pickle (holy water)—above all, his bulls, descended from those of Colchis, only that by some accident or mismanagement they had lost their brazen, and got, instead, leaden feet; and still better, the paper pardons he used to sell to poor condemned Newgate wretches, commanding all mayors, sheriffs, jailors, &c. to set the holder at large, in terms more imperative than we care to quote, but which yet never proved of any use; and how, when he had in these ways become exceeding rich, his head began to turn, and he grew in fact distracted, conceiving the strangest imaginations in the world, sometimes, in the height of his fits, calling himself God Almighty and monarch of the universe; taking three old high-crowned hats, and clapping them all on his head three-story-high, with a large bunch of keys at his girdle, and an angling-rod in his hands, “in which guise, whoever went to take him by the hand in the way of salutation, Peter, with much grace, like a well-educated spaniel, would present them with his foot;” and “whoever walked by without paying him their compliments, having a wonderful strong breath, he would blow their hats off into the dirt;” and how his affairs at home went upside down, and his two brothers had a wretched time; “where his first *boutade** was to kick both their wives one morning out of doors, and his own too, and, in their stead, gave orders to pick up the first three strollers that could be met with in the streets;” and the crowning scene of the transubstantiation of the loaf of brown bread into the shoulder of mutton, with

* A sudden jerk or lash given to a horse.

sundry other minor illustrations of Peter's lying, swearing, and mad tyranny and extravagance. But, as a shorter and more manageable passage, we will take instead for our next extract the account in a subsequent chapter of the first proceedings of his two brothers, Martin (the representative of Lutheranism and the Church of England) and Jack (who stands for Calvinism, Presbytery, and Protestant dissent), after, Peter having grown so scandalous that all the neighbourhood began in plain words to say he was no better than a knave, they had left his house, or rather been kicked out of it, having previously, however, both contrived to take a copy of their father's will, and also "to break open the cellar-door, and get a little good drink to spirit and comfort their hearts." At first they took a lodging together; but although, we are told, they "had lived in much friendship and agreement under the tyranny of their brother Peter, as it is the talent of fellow-sufferers to do," now that they were left to themselves it soon began to appear that their complexions, or tempers, were extremely different, "which," says our author, "the present posture of their affairs gave them sudden opportunity to discover;" and then he proceeds as follows:—

I ought in method to have informed the reader, about fifty pages ago, of a fancy Lord Peter took, and infused into his brothers, to wear on their coats whatever trimmings came up in fashion; never pulling off any as they went out of the mode, but keeping on all together, which amounted in time to a medley the most antic you can possibly conceive; and this to a degree, that, upon the time of their falling out, there was hardly a thread of the original coat to be seen; but an infinite quantity of lace, and ribbons, and fringe, and embroidery, and points—I mean only those tagged with silver, for the

rest fell off. Now this material circumstance, having been forgot in due place, as good fortune has ordered, comes in very properly here, when the two brothers are just going to reform their vestures into the primitive state prescribed by their father's will.

They both unanimously entered upon this great work, looking sometimes on their coats and sometimes on the will. Martin laid the first hand; at one twitch brought off a large handful of points; and, with a second pull, stripped away ten dozen yards of fringe. But, when he had gone thus far, he demurred a while: he knew very well there yet remained a great deal more to be done: however, the first heat being over, his violence began to cool, and he resolved to proceed more moderately in the rest of the work, having already narrowly escaped a swinging rent in pulling off the points, which, being tagged with silver (as we have observed before), the judicious workman had, with much sagacity, double sewn, to preserve them from falling. Resolving, therefore, to rid his coat of a large quantity of gold lace, he picked up the stitches with much caution, and diligently gleaned out all the loose threads as he went, which proved to be a work of time. Then he fell about the embroidered Indian figures of men, women, and children, against which, as you have heard in its due place, their father's testament was extremely exact and severe: these, with much dexterity and application, were, after a while, quite eradicated or utterly defaced. For the rest, where he observed the embroidery to be worked so close as not to be got away without damaging the cloth, or where it served to hide or strengthen any flaw in the body of the coat, contracted by the perpetual tampering of workmen upon it, he concluded the wisest course was to let it remain, resolving in no case whatsoever that the substance of the stuff should suffer injury, which he thought the best method for serving the true intent and meaning of his father's will. And this is the nearest account I have been able to collect of Martin's proceedings upon this great revolution.

But his brother Jack, whose adventures will be so ex-

extraordinary as to furnish a great part in the remainder of this discourse, entered upon the matter with other thoughts and a quite different spirit. For the memory of Lord Peter's injuries produced a degree of hatred and spite, which had a much greater share of inciting him than any regards after his father's commands; since these appeared, at the best, only secondary and subservient to the other. However, for this medley of humour he made a shift to find a very plausible name, honouring it with the title of zeal; which is perhaps the most significant word that has been ever yet produced in any language; as I think I have fully proved in my excellent analytical discourse upon that subject; wherein I have deduced a histori-theo-physi-logical account of zeal, showing how it first proceeded from a notion into a word, and thence, in a hot summer, ripened into a tangible substance. This work, containing three large volumes in folio, I design very shortly to publish by the modern way of subscription, not doubting but the nobility and gentry of the land will give me all possible encouragement; having had already a taste of what I am able to perform.

I record, therefore, that brother Jack, brimful of this miraculous compound, reflecting with indignation upon Peter's tyranny, and farther provoked by the despondency of Martin, prefaced his resolutions to this purpose. "What," said he, "a rogue, that locked up his drink, turned away our wives, cheated us of our fortunes; palmed his damned crusts upon us for mutton; and at last kicked us out of doors; must we be in his fashions, with a pox! A rascal, besides, that all the street cries out against." Having thus kindled and inflamed himself as high as possible, and by consequence in a delicate temper for beginning a reformation, he set about the work immediately; and in three minutes made more dispatch than Martin had done in as many hours. For, courteous reader, you are given to understand that zeal is never so highly obliged as when you set it a tearing; and Jack, who doted on that quality in himself, allowed it at this time its full swing. Thus it happened that,

stripping down a parcel of gold lace a little too hastily, he rent the main body of his coat from top to bottom; and, whereas his talent was not of the happiest in taking up a stitch, he knew no better way than to darn it again with pack-thread and a skewer. But the matter was yet infinitely worse (I record it with tears) when he proceeded to the embroidery; for, being clumsy by nature, and of temper impatient; withal, beholding millions of stitches that required the nicest hand and sedatest constitution to extricate; in a great rage he tore off the whole piece, cloth and all, and flung it into the kennel, and furiously thus continued his career:—"Ah, good brother Martin," said he, "do as I do, for the love of God; strip, tear, pull, rend, flay off all, that we may appear as unlike that rogue Peter as it is possible: I would not for a hundred pounds carry the least mark about me that might give occasion to the neighbours of suspecting that I was related to such a rascal." But Martin, who at this time happened to be extremely phlegmatic and sedate, begged his brother, of all love, not to damage his coat by any means; for he never would get such another; desired him to consider that it was not their business to form their actions by any reflection upon Peter, but by observing the rules prescribed in their father's will. That he should remember Peter was still their brother, whatever faults or injuries he had committed; and therefore they should by all means avoid such a thought as that of taking measures for good and evil from no other rule than of opposition to him. That it was true the testament of their good father was very exact in what related to the wearing of their coats: yet it was no less penal and strict in prescribing agreement, and friendship, and affection between them. And, therefore, if straining a point were at all dispensable, it would certainly be so rather to the advance of unity than increase of contradiction.

Martin had still proceeded as gravely as he began, and doubtless would have delivered an admirable lecture of morality, which might have exceedingly contributed to my reader's repose both of body and mind, the true ulti-

mate end of ethics; but Jack was already gone a flight-shot beyond his patience. And, as in scholastic disputes nothing serves to rouse the spleen of him that opposes so much as a kind of pedantic affected calmness in the respondent; disputants being for the most part like unequal scales, where the gravity of the one side advances the lightness of the other, and causes it to fly up and kick the beam; so it happened here that the weight of Martin's argument exalted Jack's levity, and made him fly out and spurn against his brother's moderation. In short, Martin's patience put Jack in a rage; but that which more afflicted him was, to observe his brother's coat so well reduced into the state of innocence; while his own was either wholly rent to his shirt, or those places which had escaped his cruel clutches were still in Peter's livery. So that he looked like a drunken bean, half rifled by bullies; or like a fresh tenant of Newgate, when he has refused the payment of garnish; or like a discovered shop-lifter, left to the mercy of Exchange women*. Like any, or like all, of these, a medley of rags, and lace, and rents, and fringes, unfortunate Jack did now appear: he would have been extremely glad to see his coat in the condition of Martin's, but infinitely gladder to find that of Martin in the same predicament with his. However, since neither of these was likely to come to pass, he thought fit to lend the whole business another turn, and to dress up necessity into a virtue. Therefore, after as many of the fox's arguments as he could muster up, for bringing Martin to reason, as he called it; or, as he meant it, into his own ragged, bob-tailed condition; and observing he said all to little purpose; what, alas! was left for the forlorn Jack to do, but, after a million of scurrilities against his brother, to run mad with spleen, and spite, and contradiction. To be short, here began a mortal breach between these two. Jack went immediately to new lodgings, and in a few days it was for certain reported that

* The women who kept the shops in the galleries of the Old Royal Exchange.

he had run out of his wits. In a short time after, he appeared abroad, and confirmed the report by falling into the oddest whimseys that ever a sick brain conceived.

How good, too, is the following, which is all we can afford to give of Jack's vagaries:—

He would stand in the turning of a street, and, calling to those who passed by, would cry to one, "Worthy Sir, do me the honour of a good slap in the chaps." To another, "Honest friend, pray favour me with a handsome kick Madam, shall I entreat a small box on the car from your ladyship's fair hands? Noble captain, lend a reasonable thwack, for the love of God, with that cane of yours over these poor shoulders." And when he had, by such earnest solicitations, made a shift to procure a basting sufficient to swell up his fancy and his sides, he would return home extremely comforted, and full of terrible accounts of what he had undergone for the public good. "Observe this stroke," said he, showing his bare shoulders: "a plaguy janisary gave it me this morning, at seven o'clock, as, with much ado, I was driving off the Great Turk. Neighbours, mind, this broken head deserves a plaster; had poor Jack been tender of his noddle, you would have seen the pope and the French king, long before this time of day, among your wives and your warehouses. Dear Christians, the Great Mogul was come as far as Whitechapel, and you may thank these poor sides that he hath not (God bless us!) already swallowed up man, woman, and child."

It was highly worth observing the singular effects of that aversion or antipathy which Jack and his brother Peter seemed, even to an affectation, to bear against each other. Peter had lately done some rogueries that forced him to abscond, and he seldom ventured to stir out before night, for fear of bailiffs. Their lodgings were at the two most distant parts of the town from each other; and, whenever their occasions or humours called them abroad, they would make choice of the oddest unlikely times, and most uncouth rounds they could invent, that they might be sure to avoid one another; yet, after

all this, it was their perpetual fortune to meet. The reason of which is easy enough to apprehend: for, the frenzy and the spleen of both having the same foundation, we may look upon them as two pair of compasses, equally extended, and the fixed foot of each remaining in the same centre, which, though moving contrary ways at first, will be sure to encounter somewhere or other in the circumference. Besides, it was among the great misfortunes of Jack to bear a huge personal resemblance with his brother Peter. Their humour and dispositions were not only the same, but there was a close analogy in their shape, their size, and their mien. Insomuch as nothing was more frequent than for a bailiff to seize Jack by the shoulders, and cry "Mr. Peter, you are the king's prisoner." Or, at other times, for one of Peter's nearest friends to accost Jack with open arms, "Dear Peter, I am glad to see thee; pray send me one of your best medicines for the worms." This, we may suppose, was a mortifying return of those pains and proceedings Jack had laboured in so long; and, finding how directly opposite all his endeavours had answered to the sole end and intention which he had proposed to himself, how could it avoid having terrible effects upon a head and heart so furnished as his? However, the poor remainders of his coat bore all the punishment; the orient sun never entered upon his diurnal progress without missing a piece of it. He hired a tailor to stitch up the collar so close that it was ready to choke him, and squeezed out his eyes at such a rate as one could see nothing but the white. What little was left of the main substance of the coat he rubbed every day for two hours against a rough-cast wall, in order to grind away the remnants of lace and embroidery; but at the same time went on with so much violence, that he proceeded a heathen philosopher. Yet, after all he could do of this kind, the success continued still to disappoint his expectation. For, as it is the nature of rags to bear a kind of mock resemblance to finery, there being a sort of fluttering appearance in both which is not to be distinguished at a distance, in the dark, or by shortsighted eyes, so, in those junctures, it

fared with Jack and his tatters; that they offered to the first view a ridiculous flaunting, which, assisting the resemblance in person and air, thwarted all his projects of separation, and left so near a similitude between them as frequently deceived the very disciples and followers of both.

It is said that one day in the latter part of his life Swift, after looking over the Tale of a Tub for some time, suddenly shut the book, and exclaimed, "Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that!" It was indeed something too good to be done over again; so happy a feat as to forbid all hope of its ever being surpassed, and in that way tending even to repress the courage and effort by which it might have been equalled. But at this period of his life Swift's genius certainly had a fervour, exuberance, and florid gaiety which it lost in a great degree (whatever it may have gained in compensation) as he advanced in years. Here and there in the Tale of a Tub, and likewise in the Battle of the Books, the expression rises to an eloquence, and sometimes to a poetic glow, such as is not to be found in any of his later writings either in prose or in verse. In the discourse, for instance, prefixed to the Tale, entitled 'The Author's Apology,' how lively and apt is the figure by which "the usual fate of common answerers to books that are allowed to have any merit" is illustrated:—"They are indeed like annuals that grow about a young tree, and seem to vie with it for a summer, but fall and die with the leaves in autumn, and are never heard of more." Here is the olden and most hackneyed of all similitudes—that of the elm and the vine—made again as bright and striking as the first time it was used. In the dedication to Prince Posterity, the different methods of

tyranny and destruction which the prince's governor, Time, employs in putting out of existence the productions of the common authors of the day are thus described :—" His inveterate malice is such to the writings of our age, that, of several thousands produced yearly from this renowned city, before the next revolution of the sun there is not one to be heard of: unhappy infants! many of them barbarously destroyed before they have so much as learned their mother tongue to beg for pity. Some he stifles in their cradles; others he frights into convulsions, whereof they suddenly die; some he flays alive; others he tears limb from limb. Great numbers are offered to Moloch; and the rest, tainted by his breath, die of a languishing consumption." How powerfully are the extemporaneous preacher and his hearers depicted in the great chapter on the renowned sect of the Aeolists (or pretenders to immediate inspiration) founded by Jack :—" The wind, in breaking forth, deals with his face as it does with that of the sea, first blackening, then wrinkling, and at last bursting it into a foam. It is in this guise the sacred Aeolist delivers his oracular belches to his panting disciples, of whom some are greedily gaping after the sanctified breath; others are all the while hymning out the praises of the winds; and, gently wafted to and fro by their own humming, do thus represent the soft breezes of their deities appeased." In the next chapter—" A digression concerning the original, the use, and improvement of Madness in a Commonwealth"—the eloquence flows throughout in a full and rapid stream, rising at times to a height not unworthy of Bacon or Taylor. Here is a single sentence :—" How fading and insipid do all objects accost us that are not

conveyed in the vehicle of delusion ! how shrunk is every thing as it appears in the glass of nature ! so that, if it were not for the assistance of artificial mediums, false lights, refracted angles, varnish and tinsel, there would be a mighty level in the felicity and enjoyments of mortal men." When he wrote this, indeed, Swift must have been thinking of Bacon, or fresh from the reading of the passage in his Essay on Truth, in which he says, "This same truth is a naked and open daylight, that doth not show the masks, and mummeries, and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily as candle lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that, if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves ?" Swift, with the phraseology of this passage apparently running in his head, goes on to condemn the so-called wisdom which consists in *unmasking* ; concluding his argument as follows : "Whatever philosopher or projector can find out an art to solder and patch up the flaws and imperfections of nature, will deserve much better of mankind, and teach us a more useful science, than that so much in present esteem, of widening and exposing them, like him who held anatomy to be the ultimate end of physic. And he whose fortunes and dispositions have placed him in a convenient station to enjoy the fruits of this noble art ; he that can, with Epicurus, content his ideas with the films and images that fly off upon his senses from the superficies of things ; such a man, truly wise, creams off nature, leav-

ing the sour and the dregs for philosophy and reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined point of felicity, called the possession of being well deceived ; the serene, peaceful state of being a fool among knaves." We will take our leave of the Tale of a Tub with the transcription of one sentence more from the next chapter : " I have a strong inclination," exclaims our half jesting, half serious author, " before I leave the world, to taste a blessing which we mysterious writers can seldom reach till we have gotten into our graves ; whether it be that fame, being a fruit grafted on the body, can hardly grow, and much less ripen, till the stock is in the earth ; or whether she be a bird of prey, and is lured, among the rest, to pursue after the scent of a carcase ; or whether she conceives her trumpet sounds best and farthest when she stands on a tomb, by the advantage of a rising ground and the echo of a hollow vault."

Of the Battle of the Books we can only afford to give the concluding section, entitled ' The Episode of Bentley and Wotton,' the latter portion of which in particular is a very happy Homeric burlesque :—

" Day being far spent, and the numerous forces of the moderns half inclining to a retreat, there issued forth from a squadron of their heavy-armed foot a captain, whose name was Bentley, the most deformed of all the moderns ; tall, but without shape or comeliness ; large, but without strength or proportion. His armour was patched up of a thousand incoherent pieces ; and the sound of it as he marched was loud and dry, like that made by the fall of a sheet of lead, which an Etesian wind blows suddenly down from the roof of some steeple. His helmet was of old rusty iron, but the vizor was brass, which, tainted by his breath, corrupted into copperas, nor wanted gall from the same fountain ; so that, whenever provoked by anger or labour, an atramentous quality, of most ma-

lignant nature, was seen to distil from his lips.
 Completely armed,* he advanced with a slow and heavy pace where the modern chiefs were holding a consult upon the sum of things; who, as he came onwards, laughed to behold his crooked leg and humped shoulder, which his boot and armour, vainly endeavouring to hide, were forced to comply with and expose. The generals made use of him for his talent of railing; which, kept within government, proved frequently of great service to their cause, but at other times did more mischief than good; for, at the least touch of offence, and often without any at all, he would, like a wounded elephant, convert it against his leaders. Such, at this juncture, was the disposition of Bentley; grieved to see the enemy prevail, and dissatisfied with every body's conduct but his own. He humbly gave the modern generals to understand that he conceived, with great submission, they were all a pack of rogues, and fools, and d—d cowards, and confounded loggerheads, and illiterate whelps, and nonsensical scoundrels; that, if himself had been constituted general, those presumptuous dogs, the ancients, would long before this have been beaten out of the field. You, said he, sit here idle; but, when I, or any other valiant modern, kill an enemy, you are sure to seize the spoil. But I will not march one foot against the foe till you all swear to me that, whomever I take or kill, his arms I shall quietly possess. Bentley having spoken thus, Scaliger, bestowing him a sour look, Miscreant prater! said he, eloquent only in thine own eyes, thou raillest without wit, or truth, or discretion. The malignity of thy temper perverteth nature; thy learning makes thee more barbarous; thy study of humanity† more inhuman; thy converse among poets, more grovelling, miry, and dull. All arts of civilizing others render thee rude and untractable; courts have taught thee ill manners, and polite conversation has finished thee a pedant.

* He is represented as grasping a flail in his right hand, and a vessel full of filth in his left.

† The Literæ Humaniores.

Besides, a greater ooward burdeneth not the army. never despond : I pass my word, whatever spoil takest shall certainly be thy own ; though I hope vile carcase will first become a prey to kites and w

Bentley durst not reply ; but, half choked with s and rage, withdrew in full resolution of performing great achievement. With him, for his aid and c mon, he took his beloved Wotton ; resolving by j or surprise to attempt some neglected quarter of th cients' army. They began their march over ea of their slaughtered friends ; then to the rig their own forces ; then wheeled northward, till came to Aldrovandus's tomb, which they pass the side of the declining sun. And now the rived, with fear, toward the enemy's outguards ; ing about if haply they might spy the quarters o wounded, or some straggling sleepers, unarmed apart from the rest. As when two mongrel curs, native greediness and domestic want provoke and j partnership, though fearful, nightly to invade the of some rich grazier, they, with tails depressed lolling tongues, creep soft and slow ; meanwhil conscions moon, now in her zenith, on their guilty darts perpendicular rays ; nor dare they bark, t much provoked at her refulgent visage, whether s paddle by reflection or in sphere direct ; but one s the region round, while the other scouts the pl haply to discover, at distance from the flock, som case half-devoured, the refuse of gorged wolves o now ravens. So marched this lovely, loving p friends, nor with less fear and circumspection ; w a distance they might perceive two shining su armour hanging upon an oak, and the owners not in a profound sleep. The two friends drew lot the pursuing this adventure fell to Bentley ; on he and in his van Confusion and Amaze, while Horro Affright brought up the rear. As he came near, t two heroes of the ancients' army, Phalaris and A lay fast asleep ; Bentley would fain have dispatched both, and, stealing close, aimed his flail at Pha

breast. But then the goddess Affright, interposing, caught the modern in her icy arms, and dragged him from the danger she foresaw; both the dormant heroes happened to turn at the same instant, though soundly sleeping and busy in a dream. For Phalaris was just that minute dreaming how a most vile poetaster had lampooned him, and how he had got him roaring in his bull. And Aesop dreamed that, as he and the ancient chiefs were lying on the ground, a wild ass, broke loose, ran about trampling and kicking . . . in their faces. Bentley, leaving the two heroes asleep, seized on both their armours, and withdrew in quest of his darling Wotton.

He, in the mean time, had wandered long in search of some enterprise, till at length he arrived at a small rivulet that issued from a fountain hard by, called, in the language of mortal men, Helicon. Here he stopped, and, parched with thirst, resolved to allay it in this limpid stream. Thrice, with profane hands, he essayed to raise the water to his lips, and thrice it slipped all through his fingers. Then he stooped prone on his breast, but, ere his mouth had kissed the liquid crystal, Apollo came, and in the channel held his shield betwixt the modern and the fountain, so that he drew up nothing but mud. For, although no fountain on earth can compare with the clearness of Helicon, yet there lies at bottom a thick sediment of slime and mud; for so Apollo begged of Jupiter, as a punishment to those who durst attempt to taste it with unhallowed lips, and for a lesson to all not to draw too deep or far from the spring.

At the fountain-head Wotton discerned two heroes; the one he could not distinguish, but the other was soon known for Temple, general of the allies to the ancients. His back was turned, and he was employed in drinking large draughts in his helmet from the fountain, where he had withdrawn himself to rest from the toils of the war. Wotton, observing him, with quaking knees and trembling hands, spoke thus to himself: O that I could kill this destroyer of our army! What renown should I purchase among the chiefs! But to issue out against him, n against man, shield against shield, and lance against

lance, what modern of us dare? For he fights like a god, and Pallas or Apollo are ever at his elbow. But, O mother! if what Fame reports be true, that I am the son of so great a goddess,* grant me to hit Temple with this lance, that the stroke may send him to hell, and that I may return in safety and triumph, laden with his spoils. The first part of this prayer the gods granted at the intercession of his mother and of Momus; but the rest, by a perverse wind sent from Fate, was scattered in the air. Then Wotton grasped his lance, and, brandishing it thrice over his head, darted it with all his might, the goddess his mother at the same time adding strength to his arm. Away the lance went whizzing, and reached even to the belt of the averted ancient, upon whom lightly grazing it fell to the ground.† Temple neither felt the weapon touch him nor heard it fall; and Wotton

* Wotton is represented as the son of a malignant deity, called Criticism, by an unknown father of mortal race. "She dwelt," we are told, "on the top of a snowy mountain in Nova Zembla; there Momus found her extended in her den upon the spoils of numberless volumes half devoured. At her right hand sat Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age; at her left Pride, her mother, dressing her up in the scraps of paper herself had torn. There was Opinion, her sister, light of foot, hoodwinked, and headstrong, yet giddy and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dulness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry, and Ill-Manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat; her head, and ears, and voice resembled those of an ass; her teeth fallen out before; her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself; her diet was the overflowing of her own gall; her spleen was so large as to stand prominent, like a dug of the first rate; nor wanted excrescences in form of teats, at which a crew of ugly monsters were greedily sucking; and, what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of spleen increased faster than the sucking could diminish it."

† This may be understood as an admission that Temple was mistaken on the point of the authenticity of the Epistles of Phalaris, though the matter is represented as of no moment in reference to the great question at issue.

might have escaped to his army, with the honour of having remitted his lance against so great a leader unrevenged; but Apollo, enraged that a javelin flung by the assistance of so foul a goddess should pollute his fountain, put on the shape of ———, and softly came to young Boyle, who then accompanied Temple. He pointed first to the lance, then to the distant modern that flung it, and commanded the young hero to take immediate revenge. Boyle, clad in a suit of armour which had been given him by all the gods, immediately advanced against the trembling foe, who now fled before him. As a young lion in the Libyan plains or Araby Desert, sent by his aged sire to hunt for prey, or health, or exercise, he scours along, wishing to meet some tiger from the mountains or a furious boar; if chance a wild ass, with brayings importune, affronts his ear, the generous beast, though loathing to distain his claws with blood so vile, yet much provoked at the offensive noise, which Echo, foolish nymph, like her ill-judging sex, repeats much louder; and with more delight, than Philomela's song, he vindicates the honour of the forest, and hunts the noisy long-eared animal. So Wotton fled, so Boyle pursued. But Wotton, heavy-armed and slow of foot, began to slack his course, when his lover Bentley appeared, returning laden with the spoils of the two sleeping ancients. Boyle observed him well, and, soon discovering the helmet and shield of Phalaris his friend, both which he had lately with his own hands new polished and gilt, rage sparkled in his eyes, and, leaving the pursuit after Wotton, he furiously rushed on against this new approacher. Fain would he be revenged on both; but both now fled different ways; and, as a woman in a little house that gets a painful livelihood by spinning, if chance her geese be scattered o'er the common, she courses round the plain from side to side, compelling here and there the stragglers to the flock; they cackle loud, and flutter o'er the champaign; so Boyle pursued, so fled this pair of friends: finding at length their flight was vain, they bravely joined and drew themselves in phalanx. First Bentley threw a spear with all his force,

hoping to pierce the enemy's breast ; but Pallas came unseen, and in the air took off the point and clapped on one of lead, which, after a dead bang against the enemy's shield, fell blunted to the ground. Then Boyle, observing well his time, took up a lance of wondrous length and sharpness ; and, as this pair of friends, compacted, stood close side to side, he wheeled him to the right, and, with unusual force, darted the weapon. Bentley saw his fate approach, and, flanking down his arms close to his sides, hoping to save his body, in went the point, passing through arm and side, nor stopped or spent its force till it had also pierced the valiant Wotton, who, going to sustain his dying friend, shared his fate. As when a skilful cook has trussed a brace of woodcocks, he with iron skewer pierces the tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinioned to the ribs ; so was this pair of friends transfixed, till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths : so closely joined that Charon would mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare. Farewell, beloved, loving pair ; few equals have you left behind ; and happy and immortal shall you be, if all my wit and eloquence can make you.

Swift was undoubtedly the most masculine intellect of his age, the most earnest thinker of a time in which there was less among us of earnest and deep thinking than in any other era of our literature. In its later and more matured form, his wit itself becomes earnest and passionate, and has a severity, a fierceness, a *severa indignatio*, that are all his own, and that have never been blended in any other writer with so keen a perception of the ludicrous and so much general comic power. The breath of his rich, pungent, original jocularities is at the same time cutting as a sword and consuming as fire. Other masters of the same art are satisfied if they can only make their readers laugh ; this is their main, often their

sole aim : with Swift, to excite the emotion of the ludicrous is, in most of his writings, only a subordinate purpose,—a means employed for effecting quite another and a much higher end ; if he labours to make anything ridiculous, it is because he hates it, and would have it trodden into the earth or extirpated. This, at least, became the settled temper of all the middle and latter portion of his life. No sneaking kindness for his victim is to be detected in his crucifying raillery ; he is not a mere admirer of the comic picturesque, who will sometimes rack or gibbet an unhappy individual for the sake of the fantastic grimaces he may make, or the capers he may cut in the air ; he has the true spirit of an executioner, and only loves his joke as sauce and seasoning to more serious work. Few men have been more perversely prejudiced and self-willed than Swift, and therefore of absolute truth his works may probably contain less than many others not so earnestly written ; but of what was truth to the mind of the writer, of what he actually believed and desired, no works contain more. Here, again, as well as in the other respect noticed some pages back, Swift is in the middle class of writers ; far above those whose whole truth is truth of expression—that is, correspondence between the words and the thoughts (possibly without any between the thoughts and the writer's belief) ; but below those who both write what they think, and whose thoughts are pre-eminently valuable for their intrinsic beauty or profoundness. Yet in setting honestly and effectively before us even his own passions and prejudices a writer also tells us the truth—the truth, at least, respecting himself, if not respecting anything else. This much does Swift always ; and this is his great distinction

among the masters of wit and humour;—the merriest of his jests is an utterance of some real feeling of his heart at the moment, as much as the fiercest of his invectives. Alas! with all his jesting and merriment, he did not know what it was to have a mind at ease, or free from the burden and torment of dark, devouring passions, till, in his own words, the cruel indignation that tore continually at his heart was laid at rest in the grave. In truth, the insanity which ultimately fell down upon and laid prostrate his fine faculties had cast something of its black shadow athwart their vision from the first,—as he himself probably felt or suspected when he determined to bequeath his fortune to build an hospital in his native country for persons afflicted with that calamity; and sad enough, we may be sure, he was at heart, when he gaily wrote that he did so merely

To show, by one satiric touch,
No nation wanted it so much.*

Yet the madness, or predisposition to madness, was also part and parcel of the man, and possibly an element of his genius,—which might have had less earnestness and force, as well as less activity, productiveness, and originality, if it had not been excited and impelled by that perilous fervour. Nay, something of their power and

* “I have often,” says Lord Orrery, “heard him lament the state of childhood and idiotism to which some of the greatest men of this nation were reduced before their death. He mentioned, as examples within his own time, the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Somers; and, when he cited these melancholy instances, it was always with a heavy sigh, and with gestures that showed great uneasiness, as if he felt an impulse of what was to happen to him before he died.”—*Remarks*, p. 188.

peculiar character Swift's writings may owe to the exertions called forth in curbing and keeping down the demon, which, like a proud steed under a stout rider, would have mastered him if he had not mastered it, and, although support and strength to him so long as it was held in subjection, would, dominant over him, have rent him in pieces, as in the end it did. Few could have maintained the struggle so toughly and so long.

Swift's latter style cannot be better illustrated than by a few passages from his famous series of Letters, written in 1724, under the signature of M. B. Drapier, against Wood's halfpence and farthings. Wood was an extensive proprietor of iron-works in Staffordshire, who had obtained a patent for coining copper money to the extent of 108,000*l.* sterling, to circulate in Ireland, where the want of such small coin for change was confessedly much felt and had been long complained of. It is difficult to get at what were really the facts of the matter; very plausible explanations and answers were produced by Wood and the government upon the various points as to which the project was attacked; and there was undoubtedly much exaggeration in many of Swift's representations. But the circumstances were by no means free from suspicion. Swift, in his second Letter, sums up his leading objections in a short statement, which he proposed should be circulated for signature throughout the country, to the following purport:—"Whereas one William Wood, hardwareman, now or lately sojourning in the City of London, has, by many misrepresentations, procured a grant for coining 108,000*l.* in copper halfpence for this kingdom, which is a sum five times greater than our occasions require; and whereas it is

notorious that the said Wood has coined his halfpence of such base metal and false weight that they are at least six times in seven below the real value ; and whereas we have reason to apprehend that the said Wood may at any time hereafter clandestinely coin as many more halfpence as he pleases ; and whereas the said patent neither does nor can oblige his majesty's subjects to receive the said halfpence in any payment, but leaves it to their voluntary choice, because by law the subject cannot be obliged to take any money except gold or silver ; and whereas, contrary to the letter and meaning of the said patent, the said Wood has declared that every person shall be obliged to take 5½d. of his coin in every payment ; and whereas the House of Commons and Privy Council have severally addressed his most sacred Majesty, representing the ill consequences which the said coinage may have upon this kingdom ; and, lastly, whereas it is universally agreed that the whole nation to a man (except Mr. Wood and his confederates) are in the utmost apprehensions of the ruinous consequences that must follow from the said coinage ; therefore we whose names are underwritten, being persons of considerable estates in this kingdom, do unanimously resolve and declare that we will never receive one farthing or halfpenny of the said Wood's coining, and that we will direct all our tenants to refuse the said coin from any person whatsoever." Some of these allegations, certainly, were never very well made out. That about the lightness of the pieces, and the base quality of the metal, in particular, seems to have been without foundation, in so far at least as regarded the portion of the coinage actually fabricated. But, on the other hand, some facts and surmises, which could not

be so openly stated, had a large share in exciting the public indignation. It was believed that the profits of the patent were to be shared by Wood with the royal mistress, the Duchess of Munster (or Countess of Kendal, as she was commonly called in England), by whose influence it had been obtained; and various irritating expressions, in regard to the attempt made to defeat the project, were attributed not only to Wood himself, but also to Walpole, the minister, and other persons high in authority and power in England. Feelings and principles thus came to be involved in the contest, going far beyond the mere economical and material considerations that appeared on the surface. The stand was felt to be for the dignity and liberties of the nation; and Swift was universally regarded by his countrymen as the champion of the independence of Ireland,—the preserver of whatever they had most to value or to be proud of as a people. And, perhaps, the birth of political and patriotic spirit in Ireland, as a general sentiment, may be traced with some truth to this affair of Wood's halfpence and to these letters of Swift's. No agitation that has since been got up in that country has been so immediately and completely successful. The whole power of the English government was found ineffectual to cope with the opposition that had been aroused and marshalled by one man; and Wood soon found there was nothing for him but to resign his patent. No other of Swift's writings brought him anything like the fame and influence that he acquired by his *Drapier's Letters*. At first pains were taken to conceal the authorship, and for a short time, it would appear, successfully. It was desirable to withhold at any rate such legal proof as might have enabled the

government to lay their hands upon him. A proclamation was early issued, offering a reward of 300*l.* for the discovery of the writer; but, after the printer had been indicted for some passages in the fourth letter, and the grand jury had thrown out the bill, concealment was probably no longer attempted; and even from the first it must have been generally suspected, as soon as people began to speculate on the matter, that the Drapier could be nobody but Swift. From this date to the end of his life, or at least till the extinction of his faculties, Swift, or the Dean, as he was universally called, continued to be the most popular and most powerful individual in Ireland, his voice, in Dublin at least, being in every election, or other occasion on which the citizens had any public part to act, obeyed like the fiat of an oracle. That warm-hearted race are not apt to forget their benefactors, or to change their idols; but neither did Swift abuse his ascendancy: he never sought to turn his popularity to account in the promotion of any private interest or object: he asked nothing for himself from any government; he never obtained any higher preferment, but lived and died Dean of St. Patrick's, and nothing more. As for the Letters themselves, much forgotten as they are now, they have been described as the most Demosthenic compositions since the time of Demosthenes; and it would, perhaps, be difficult to produce any modern writing in which the most remarkable qualities of the old Greek orator are so happily exemplified,—his force, his rapidity, his directness, his alertness and dexterity, his luminousness of statement and apparent homeliness or plainness, the naturalness and at the same time aptness of his figure—

his wonderful logic (whether for fair reasoning or sophistry and misrepresentation), his ever-present life and power of interesting, his occasional fire and passion, his bursts of scorn, indignation, and withering invective, and the other resources of his supreme art. The measure, such as it is, in which all this is found in Swift can only, however, of course be fully gathered from the entire Letters.

The following passages are from the second Letter :—

But your newsletter says that an assay was made of the coin. How impudent and insupportable is this! Wood takes care to coin a dozen or two halfpence of good metal, sends them to the Tower, and they are approved; and these must answer all that he has already coined, or shall coin for the future. It is true, indeed, that a gentleman often sends to my shop for a pattern of stuff; I cut it fairly off, and, if he likes it, he comes or sends, and compares the pattern with the whole piece, and probably we come to a bargain. But if I were to buy a hundred sheep, and the grazier should bring me one single wether, fat and well fleeced, by way of pattern, and expect the same price round for the whole hundred, without suffering me to see them before he was paid, or giving me good security to restore my money for those that were lean, or shorn, or scabby, I would be none of his customers. I have heard of a man who had a mind to sell his house, and therefore carried a piece of brick in his pocket, which he showed as a pattern to encourage customers; and this is directly the case in point with Mr. Wood's assay.

The paragraph concludes thus: "N.B." (that is to say, *nota bene* or *mark well*) "No evidence appeared from Ireland, or elsewhere, to prove the mischiefs complained of, or any abuses whatsoever committed, in the execution of the said grant."

The impudence of this remark exceeds all that went before. First, the House of Commons in Ireland, which

represents the whole people of the kingdom, and, secondly, the Privy Council, addressed his Majesty against these halfpence. What could be done more to express the universal sense of the nation? If his copper were diamonds, and the kingdom were entirely against it, would not that be sufficient to reject it? Must a committee of the whole House of Commons, and our whole Privy Council, go over to argue *pro* and *con* with Mr. Wood? To what end did the king give his patent for coining halfpence for Ireland? Was it not because it was represented to his sacred majesty that such a coinage would be of advantage to the good of this kingdom, and of all his subjects here? It is to the patentee's peril if this representation be false, and the execution of his patent be fraudulent and corrupt. Is he so wicked and foolish to think that his patent was given him to ruin a million and a half of people, that he might be a gainer of three or four score thousand pounds to himself? Before he was at the charge of passing a patent, much more of raking up so much filthy dross, and stamping it with his Majesty's image and superscription, should he not first, in common sense, in common equity, and common manners, have consulted the principal party concerned—that is to say, the people of the kingdom, the House of Lords or Commons, or the Privy Council? If any foreigner should ask us whose image or superscription there is on Wood's coin, we should be ashamed to tell him it was Caesar's. In that great want of copper halfpence which he alleges we were, our city set up Caesar's statue in excellent copper, at an expense that is equal in value to thirty thousand pounds of his coin, and we will not receive his image in worse metal. . . .

Although my letter be directed to you, Mr. Harding [the printer], yet I intend it for all my countrymen. I have no interest in this affair but what is common to the public. I can live better than many others; I have some gold and silver by me, and a shop well furnished; and shall be able to make a shift when many of my betters are starving. But I am grieved to see the coldness and indifference of many people with whom I

discourse. Some are afraid of a proclamation; others shrug up their shoulders and cry, "What would you have us to do?" Some give out there is no danger at all; others are comforted that it will be a common calamity, and they shall fare no worse than their neighbours. Will a man who hears midnight robbers at his door get out of bed and raise his family for a common defence; and shall a whole kingdom lie in a lethargy, while Mr. Wood comes, at the head of his confederates, to rob them of all they have, to ruin us and our posterity for ever? If a highwayman meets you on the road, you give him your money to save your life; but, God be thanked, Mr. Wood cannot touch a hair of your heads. You have all the laws of God and man on your side; when he or his accomplices offer you his dross, it is but saying no, and you are safe. If a madman should come into my shop with a handful of dirt raked out of the kennel, and offer it in payment for ten yards of stuff, I would pity or laugh at him; or, if his behaviour deserved it, kick him out of my doors. And, if Mr. Wood comes to demand my gold and silver, or commodities for which I have paid my gold and silver, in exchange for his trash, can he deserve or expect better treatment?

The following is the winding-up of Letter Third:—

I am very sensible that such a work as I have undertaken might have worthily employed a much better pen: but, when a house is attempted to be robbed, it often happens the weakest in the family runs first to stop the door. All the assistance I had were some informations from an eminent person; whereof I am afraid I have spoiled a few, by endeavouring to make them of a piece with my own productions, and the rest I was not able to manage: I was in the case of David, who could not move in the armour of Saul, and therefore I rather chose to attack this uncircumcised Philistine (Wood, I mean) with a sling and a stone. And I may say, for Wood's honour as well as my own, that he resembles Goliath in many circumstances very applicable to the present purpose; for Goliath had "a helmet of brass upon his

head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass; and he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders." In short, he was, like Mr. Wood, all over brass, and he defied the armies of the living God. Goliath's conditions of combat were likewise the same with those of Wood: "if he prevail against us, then shall we be his servants." But, if it happens that I prevail over him, I renounce the other part of the condition: he shall never be a servant of mine; for I do not think him fit to be trusted in any honest man's shop.

We have only room to give in addition a few short paragraphs from Letter Fourth:—

It is true, indeed, that within the memory of man the parliaments of England have sometimes assumed the power of binding this kingdom by laws enacted there; wherein they were at first openly opposed (as far as truth, reason, and justice are capable of opposing) by the famous Mr. Molineux, an English gentleman born here, as well as by several of the greatest patriots and best Whigs in England; but the love and torrent of power prevailed. Indeed, the arguments on both sides were invincible. For, in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery; but, in fact, eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt. But I have done; for those who have used power to cramp liberty have gone so far as to resent even the liberty of complaining; although a man upon the rack was never known to be refused the liberty of roaring as loud as he thought fit.

And, as we are apt to sink too much under unreasonable fears, so we are too soon inclined to be raised by groundless hopes, according to the nature of all consumptive bodies like ours. Thus, it has been given about for several days past that somebody in England empowered a second somebody to write to a third somebody here to assure us that we should no more be troubled

with these halfpence. And this is reported to have been done by the same person* who is said to have sworn some months ago "that he would ram them down our throats," though I doubt they would stick in our stomachs; but, whichever of these reports be true or false, it is no concern of ours. For in this point we have nothing to do with English ministers, and I should be sorry to leave it in their power to redress this grievance or to enforce it, for the report of the Committee† has given me a surfeit. The remedy is wholly in your own hands, and therefore I have digressed a little in order to refresh and continue that spirit so seasonably raised among you, and to let you see, that, by the laws of GOD, of NATURE, of NATIONS, and of your COUNTRY, you ARE and OUGHT to be as FREE a people as your brethren in England.

Before I conclude, I must beg leave in all humility to tell Mr. Wood, that he is guilty of great indiscretion, by causing so honourable a name as that of Mr. Walpole to be mentioned so often and in such a manner upon this occasion. A short paper printed at Bristol, and reprinted here, reports Mr. Wood to say "that he wonders at the impudence and insolence of the Irish in refusing his coin, and what he will do when Mr. Walpole comes to town." Where, by the way, he is mistaken; for it is the true English people of Ireland who refuse it, although we take it for granted that the Irish will do so too whenever they are asked. In another printed paper of his contriving it is roundly expressed, "that Mr. Walpole will cram his brass down our throats." Sometimes it is given out "that we must either take those halfpence or eat our brogues;" and in another newsletter, but of yesterday, we read, "that the same great man has sworn to make us swallow his coin in fire-balls."

This brings to my mind the known story of a Scotch-

* Walpole.

† A committee of the English Privy Council to whom the matter had been referred.

man, who, receiving the sentence of death with all the circumstances of hanging, beheading, quartering, embowelling, and the like, cried out, "What need all this COOKERY?" And I think we have reason to ask the same question; for, if we believe Wood, here is a dinner getting ready for us, and you see the bill of fare; and I am sorry the drink was forgot, which might easily be supplied with melted lead and flaming pitch.

What vile words are these to put into the mouth of a great counsellor, in high trust with his Majesty and looked upon as a prime minister? If Mr. Wood has no better a manner of representing his patrons, when I come to be a great man he shall never be suffered to attend at my levee. This is not the style of a great minister; it savours too much of the kettle and the furnace, and came entirely out of Wood's forge.

As for the threat of making us eat our brogues, we need not be in pain; for, if his coin should pass, that unpolite covering for the feet would no longer be a national reproach; because then we should have neither shoe nor brogue left in the kingdom. But here the falsehood of Mr. Wood is fairly detected; for I am confident Mr. Walpole never heard of a brogue in his whole life.

As to "swallowing these halfpence in fireballs," it is a story equally improbable. For, to execute this operation, the whole stock of Mr. Wood's coin and metal must be melted down, and moulded into hollow balls, with wildfire, no bigger than a reasonable throat may be able to swallow. Now, the metal he has prepared, and already coined, will amount to at least fifty millions of halfpence, to be swallowed by a million and a half of people; so that allowing two halfpence to each ball, there will be about seventeen balls of wildfire apiece to be swallowed by every person in the kingdom; and, to administer this dose, there cannot be conveniently fewer than fifty thousand operators, allowing one operator to every thirty; which, considering the squeamishness of some stomachs, and the peevishness of young children, is but reasonable. Now, under correction of better

judgments, I think the trouble and charge of such an experiment would exceed the profit; and therefore I take this report to be spurious, or at least only a new scheme of Mr. Wood himself; which, to make it pass the better in Ireland, he would father upon a minister of state.

But I will now demonstrate beyond all contradiction that Mr. Walpole is against this project of Mr. Wood, and is an entire friend to Ireland, only by this one invincible argument: that he has the universal opinion of being a wise man, an able minister, and in all his proceedings pursuing the true interest of the king his master: and that, as his integrity is above all corruption, so is his fortune above all temptation. I reckon, therefore, we are perfectly safe from that corner, and shall never be under the necessity of contending with so formidable a power, but be left to possess our brogues and potatoes in peace,—as remote from thunder as we are from Jupiter.*

Swift would probably have enjoyed a higher reputation as a poet if he had not been so great a writer in prose. His productions in verse are considerable in point of quantity, and many of them admirable of their kind. But those of them that deserve to be so described belong to the humblest kind of poetry—to that kind which has scarcely any distinctively poetical quality or characteristic about it except the rhyme. He has made some attempts in a higher style, but with very little success. His Pindaric Odes, written and published when he was a young man, drew from Dryden (who was his relation) the emphatic judgment, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet:" and, though Swift never forgave this frankness, he seems to have felt that the prognostication was a sound one, for he wrote no more Pindaric

* In allusion to the Latin proverb, *Procul a Jove, procul fulmine.*

Odes. Nor indeed did he ever afterwards attempt any thing considerable in the way of serious poetry, if we except his 'Cadenus and Vanessa' (the story of Miss Van-hornrigh), his effusion entitled 'Poetry, a Rhapsody,' and that on his own death—and even these are chiefly distinguished from his other productions by being longer and more elaborate, the most elevated portions of the first mentioned scarcely rising above narrative and reflection, and whatever there is of more dignified or solemn writing in the two others being largely intermixed with comedy and satire in his usual easy ambling style. With all his liveliness of fancy, he had no grandeur of imagination, as little feeling of the purely graceful or beautiful, no capacity of tender emotion, no sensibility to even the simplest forms of music. With these deficiencies it was impossible that he should produce any thing that could be called poetical in a high sense. But of course he could put his wit and fancy into the form of verse—and so as to make the measured expression and the rhyme give additional point and piquancy to his strokes of satire and ludicrous narratives or descriptions. Some of his lighter verses are as good as any thing of the kind in the language. As a specimen we will give one which is less known than some others that might be quoted, one of many rattling volleys of rhyme by which he aided the heavier artillery of his *Drapier's Letters*, a eulogy on Archbishop King, who gained great applause by taking the popular side on that occasion, under the title of 'An excellent New Song, upon his Grace our Good Lord Archbishop of Dublin; By Honest Jo, one of his Grace's Farmers in Fingal :—

I sing not of the Drapier's praise, nor yet of William Wood,
But I sing of a famous lord, who seeks his country's good ;
Lord William's grace of Dublin town, 'tis he that first ap-
pears,

Whose wisdom and whose piety do far exceed his years.*
In every council and debate he stands for what is right,
And still the truth he will maintain, whate'er he loses by 't.
And, though some think him in the wrong, yet still there
comes a season

When every one turns round about, and owns his grace
had reason.

His firmness to the public good, as one that knows it swore,
Has lost his grace for ten years past ten thousand pounds
and more.

Then come the poor and strip him so, they leave him not a
cross,

For he regards ten thousand pounds no more than Woods's
dross.

To beg his favour is the way new favours still to win ;
He makes no more to give ten pounds than I to give a pin.

Why, there's my landlord, now, the squire, who all in money
wallows,

He would not give a groat to save his father from the
gallows.

"A bishop," says the noble squire, "I hate the very name,
To have two thousand pounds a year—O 'tis a burning
shame!

Two thousand pounds a year! Good lord! and I to have
but five!"

And under him no tenant yet was ever known to thrive :
Now from his lordship's grace I hold a little piece of ground,
And all the rent I pay is scarce five shillings in the pound.
Then master steward takes my rent, and tells me, "Honest
Jo,

Come, you must take a cup of sack or two before you go."
He bids me then to hold my tongue, and up the money locks,
For fear my lord should send it all into the poor man's box.
And once I was so bold to beg that I might see his grace,—
Good lord! I wonder how I dared to look him in the face:
Then down I went upon my knees his blessing to obtain;
He gave it me, and ever since I find I thrive amain.

* He was at this time seventy-four.

"Then," said my lord, "I'm very glad to see thee, honest
 friend;
 I know the times are something hard, but hope they soon
 will mend:
 Pray never press yourself for rent, but pay me when you
 can;
 I find you bear a good report, and are an honest man."
 Then said his lordship with a smile, "I must have lawful
 cash;
 I hope you will not pay my rent in that same Woods's trash."
 "God bless your grace!" I then replied, "I'd see him
 hanging higher,
 Before I'd touch his filthy dross, than is Clandalkin spire.
 To every farmer twice a week all round about the Yoke,
 Our parsons read the Drapier's books, and make us honest
 folk."
 And then I went to pay the squire, and in the way I found
 His baillie driving all my cows into the parish pound:
 "Why, sirrah," said the noble squire, "how dare you see
 my face?
 Your rent is due almost a week, beside the days of grace."
 And yet the land I from him hold is set so on the rack,
 That only for the bishop's lease 'twould quickly break my
 back.
 Then God preserve his lordship's grace, and make him live
 as long
 As did Methusalem of old, and so I end my song.

POPE.

Of Swift's contemporaries, by far the most memorable
 name is that of Alexander Pope. If Swift was at the
 head of the prose-writers of the early part of the last
 century, Pope was as incontestably the first of the writers
 in verse of that day, with no other either equal or second
 to him. Born a few months before the Revolution, he
 came forth as a poet by the publication of his Pastorals in
 Tonson's Miscellany in 1709, when he was yet only in
 his twenty-first year; and they had been written five
 years before. Nor were they the earliest of his per-

formances; his Ode on Solitude, his verses upon Silence, his translations of the First Book of the Thebais and of Ovid's Epistle from Sappho to Phaon, and his much more remarkable paraphrases of Chaucer's January and May, and the Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale, all preceded the composition of the Pastorals. His Essay on Criticism (written in 1709) was published in 1711; the Messiah the same year (in the Spectator); the Rape of the Lock in 1712; the Temple of Fame (written two years before) the same year; his Windsor Forest (which he had commenced at sixteen) in 1713; the first four books of his translation of the Iliad in 1715; his Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard (written some years before) we believe in 1717, when he published a collected edition of his poems; the remaining portions of the Iliad at different times, the last in 1720; his translation of the Odyssey (in concert with Fenton and Broome) in 1725; the first three books of the Dunciad in 1728; his Epistle on Taste in 1731; his Essay on Man in 1733 and 1734; his Imitations of Horace, various other satirical pieces, the Prologue and Epilogue to the Satires, his Moral Epistles, and his modernised version of Donne's Satires between 1730 and 1740; and the fourth book of the Dunciad in 1742. Besides all this verse, collections of his Letters were published, first surreptitiously by Curl, and then by himself in 1737; and, among other publications in prose, his clever *jeu d'esprit* entitled a Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis appeared in 1713; his Preface to Shakspeare, with his edition of the works of that poet, in 1721; his Treatise of the Bathos, or Art of Sinking in Poetry, and his Memoirs of P.P., Clerk of This Parish (in ridicule of Bur-

set's History of his Own Time), in 1727. He died in May, 1744, about a year and a half before his friend Swift, who, more than twenty years his senior, had naturally anticipated that he should be the first to depart, and that, as he cynically, and yet touchingly too, expressed it, while Arbuthnot grieved for him a day, and Gay a week, he should be lamented a whole month by "poor Pope,"—whom, of all those he best knew, he seems to have the most loved.

Pope, with talent enough for anything, might deserve to be ranked among the most distinguished prose-writers of his time, if he were not its greatest poet; but it is in the latter character that he falls to be noticed in the history of our literature. And what a broad and bright region would be cut off from our poetry if he had never lived! If we even confine ourselves to his own works, without regarding the numerous subsequent writers who have in the greater part formed themselves upon him as an example and model, and may be said to constitute the school of which he was the founder, how rich an inheritance of brilliant and melodious fancies do we not owe to him! For what would any of us resign the Rape of the Lock, or the Epistle of Eleisa, or the Essay on Man, or the Moral Essays, or the Satires, or the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, or the Dunciad? That we have nothing in the same style in the language to be set beside or weighed against any one of these performances will probably be admitted by all; and, if we could say no more, this would be to assign to Pope a rank in our poetic literature which certainly not so many as half a dozen other names are entitled to share with his. Down to his own day at least, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, and Dryden alone

had any pretensions to be placed before him or by his side. It is unnecessary to dilate upon what has been sufficiently pointed out by all the critics, and is too obvious to be overlooked, the general resemblance of his poetry, in both its form and spirit, to that of Dryden rather than to that of our elder great writers. He belongs to the classical school as opposed to the romantic, to that in which a French rather than to that in which an Italian inspiration may be detected. Whether this is to be attributed principally to his constitutional temperament and the native character of his imagination, or to the influences of the age in which he lived and wrote, we shall not stop to inquire. It is enough that such is the fact. But, though he may be regarded as in the main the pupil and legitimate successor of Dryden, the amount of what he learned or borrowed from that master was by no means so considerable as to prevent his manner from having a great deal in it that is distinctive and original. If Dryden has more impetuosity and a freer flow, Pope has far more delicacy, and, on fit occasions, far more tenderness and true passion. Dryden has written nothing in the same style with the Rape of the Lock on the one hand, or with the Epistle to Abelard and the Elegy on the Death of an Unfortunate Lady on the other. Indeed, these two styles may be said to have been both, in so far as the English tongue is concerned, invented by Pope. In what preceding writer had he an example of either? Nay, did either the French or the Italian language furnish him with anything to copy from nearly so brilliant and felicitous as his own performances? In the sharper or more severe species of satire, again, while in some things he is inferior to Dryden, in others he excels.

him. It must be admitted that Dryden's is the nobler, the more generous scorn ; it is passionate, while Pope's is frequently only peevish : the one is vehement, the other venomous. But, although Pope does not wield the ponderous, fervid scourge with which his predecessor tears and mangles the luckless object of his indignation or derision, he knows how, with a lighter touch, to inflict a torture quite as maddening at the moment, and perhaps more difficult to heal. Neither has anything of the easy elegance, the simple natural grace, the most exquisite artifice imitating the absence of all art, of Horace ; but the care, and dexterity, and superior refinement of Pope, his neatness, and concentration, and point, supply a better substitute for these charms than the ruder strength, the more turbulent passion, of Dryden. If Dryden, too, has more natural fire and force, and rises in his greater passages to a stormy grandeur to which the other does not venture to commit himself, Pope in some degree compensates for that by a dignity, a quiet, sometimes pathetic, majesty, which we find nowhere in Dryden's poetry. Dryden has translated the *Æneid*, and Pope the *Iliad* ; but the two tasks would apparently have been better distributed if Dryden had chanced to have taken up Homer, and left Virgil to Pope. Pope's *Iliad*, in truth, whatever may be its merits of another kind, is, in spirit and style, about the most unhomeric performance in the whole compass of our poetry, as Pope had, of all our great poets, the most unhomeric genius. He was emphatically the poet of the highly artificial age in which he lived ; and his excellence lay in, or at least was fostered and perfected by, the accordance of all his tastes and talents, of his whole moral and intellectual

constitution, with the spirit of that condition of things. Not touches of natural emotion, but the titillation of wit and fancy,—not tones of natural music, but the tone of good society,—make up the charm of his poetry ; which, however, is, for correctness, polish, pungency, and brilliance, all that the happiest genius for that style and the most consummate art could make it. Pope, no doubt, wrote with a care and elaboration that were unknown to Dryden ; against whom, indeed, it is a reproach made by his pupil, that, copious as he was, he

——— wanted or forgot

The last and greatest art—the art to blot.

And so perhaps, although the expression is a strong and a startling one, may the said art, not without some reason, be called in reference to the particular species of poetry which Dryden and Pope cultivated, dependent as that is for its success in pleasing us almost as much upon the absence of faults as upon the presence of beauties. Such partial obscuration or distortion of the imagery as we excuse, or even admire, in the expanded mirror of a lake reflecting the woods and hills and overhanging sky, when its waters are ruffled or swayed by the fitful breeze, would be intolerable in a looking-glass, were it otherwise the most splendid article of the sort that upholstery ever furnished.

We shall not occupy much of our limited space with quotations from a writer whose works are so universally known, and are probably in the hands of most of our readers ; but those most familiar with Pope's poetry will not object to having placed before them a single extract from each of his two most perfect productions, in different styles, while the few to whom he is known chiefly

by his fame may be induced by these short specimens to seek further acquaintance with what he has written. The following is from the Rape of the Lock :—

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
 The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides ;
 While melting music steals upon the sky,
 And softened sounds along the water die ;
 Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
 Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
 All but the Sylph ; with careful thoughts oppressed,
 The impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
 He summons straight his denizens of air ;
 The lucid squadrons round the sail repair :
 Soft o'er the shrouds ærial whispers breathe,
 That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.
 Some to the sun their insect wings unfold,
 Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold ;
 Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
 Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light.
 Loose to the winds their airy garments flew,
 Thin glittering texture of the filmy dew,
 Dipped in the richest tinctures of the skies,
 Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
 Where every beam new transient colours flings,
 Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
 Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
 Superior by the head, was Ariel placed ;
 His purple pinions opening to the sun,
 He raised his azure wand, and thus begun :
 " Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear ;
 Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons, hear :
 Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned
 By laws eternal to the ærial kind.
 Some in the fields of purest ether play,
 And bask and whiten in the blaze of day ;
 Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,
 Or roll the planets through the boundless sky ;
 Some, less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
 Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
 Or seek the mists in grosser air below,
 Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,

Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide :
Of these the chief the care of nations own,
And guard with arms divine the British throne.

“ Our humble province is to tend the fair,
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care ;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let the imprisoned essences exhale ;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers ;
To steal from rainbows, ere they drop in showers,
A brighter wash ; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs ;
Nay, oft in dreams invention we bestow,
To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.

“ This day black omens threat the brightest fair
That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care ;
Some dire disaster, or by force or slight,
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapped in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw ;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade,
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade ;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball,
Or whether heaven has doomed that Shock must fall.
Haste then, ye spirits, to your charge repair,
The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care ;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign,
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine ;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favourite lock ;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

“ Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins ;
Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins ;
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye :
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain ;
Or alum styptics, with contracting power,
Shrink his thin essence like a shrivelled flower ;

Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below !”

He spoke ; the spirits from the sails descend ;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend ;
Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair ;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear ;
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of fate.

Not less spirited or less highly finished is the following, being the noble conclusion of the Dunciad :—

“ Oh,” cried the goddess,* “ for some pedant reign !
Some gentle James, to bless the land again ;
To stick the doctor’s chair into the throne,
Give law to words, or war with words alone ;
Senates and courts with Greek and Latin rule,
And turn the council to a grammar-school !
For sure, if Dulness sees a grateful day,
’Tis in the shade of arbitrary sway.
O ! if my sons may learn one earthly thing,
Teach but that one, sufficient for a king ;
That which my priests, and mine alone, maintain,
Which, as it dies or lives, we fall or reign :
May you, my Cam and Isis, preach it long,
The right divine of kings to govern wrong.”

Prompt at the call, around the goddess roll
Broad hats, and hoods, and caps, a sable shoal :
Thick and more thick the black blockade extends,
A hundred head of Aristotle’s friends.
Nor wert thou, Isis, wanting to the day
(Though Christ-Church long kept prudishly away).
Each staunch polemic, stubborn as a rock,
Each fierce logician, still expelling Locke,
Came whip and spur, and dashed through thin and thick,
On German Crouzaz and Dutch Burgersdyck.
As many quit the streams that murmuring fall
To lull the sons of Margaret and Clare-hall,
Where Bentley late tempestuous wont to sport
In troubled waters, but now sleeps in port.

Before them marched that awful Aristarch;
 Ploughed was his front with many a deep remark:
 His hat, which never vailed to human pride,
 Walker with reverence took, and laid aside.
 Low bowed the rest; he, kingly, did but nod:
 So upright quakers please both man and God.
 "Mistress! dismiss that rabble from your throne:
 Avaunt!—Is Aristarchus yet unknown?
 The mighty scholiast, whose unwearied pains
 Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains.
 Turn what they will to verse, their toil is vain,
 Critics like me shall make it prose again.
 Roman and Greek grammarians! know your better,
 Author of something yet more great than letter;
 While, towering o'er your alphabet, like Saul,
 Stands our digamma, and o'ertops them all.
 'Tis true, on words is still our whole debate,
 Disputes of Me or Te, or Aut or At,
 To sound or sink in *cano* O or A,
 To give up Cicero to C or K.
 Let Freind affect to speak as Terence spoke,
 And Alsop never but like Horace joke:
 For me, what Virgil, Pliny may deny,
 Manilius or Solinus shall supply:
 For Attic phrase in Plato let them seek,
 I poach in Suidas for unlicensed Greek.
 In ancient sense if any needs will deal,
 Be sure I give them fragments, not a meal:
 What Gellius or Stobaens hashed before,
 Or chewed by blind old scholiasts o'er and o'er,
 The critic eye, that microscope of wit,
 Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit:
 How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,
 The body's harmony, the beaming soul,
 Are things which Kuster, Burman, Wasse shall see
 When man's whole frame is obvious to a flea.

.
 Walker! our hat"—nor more he deigned to say,
 But, stern as Ajax' spectre, strode away.

.
 O muse! relate (for you can tell alone;
 Wits have short memories, and dunces none);

Relate who first, who last resigned to rest;
 Whose heads she partly, whose completely blessed;
 What charms could faction, what ambition lull,
 The venal quiet, and entrance the dull;
 Till drowned was sense, and shame, and right, and wrong;
 O sing, and hush the nations with thy song!

In vain, in vain! the all-composing hour
 Resistless falls! the muse obeys the power.
 She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
 Of night primeval, and of Chaos old!
 Before her Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
 And all its varying rainbows die away.
 Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
 The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
 As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
 The sickening stars fade off the ethereal plain;
 As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppressed,
 Closed one by one to everlasting rest;
 Thus, at her felt approach, and secret might,
 Art after art goes out, and all is night.
 See skulking truth to her own cavern fled,
 Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head!
 Philosophy, that leaned on heaven before,
 Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
 Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
 And Metaphysic calls for aid on sense!
 See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
 In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
 Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
 And unawares Morality expires.
 Nor public flame nor private dares to shine,
 Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
 Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored!
 Light dies before thy uncreating word:
 Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
 And universal darkness buries all.

ADDISON AND STEELE.

Next to the prose of Swift and the poetry of Pope, perhaps the portion of the literature of the beginning of the last century that was both most influential at the time, and still lives most in the popular remembrance, is

that connected with the names of Addison and Steele. These two writers were the chief boast of the Whig party, as Swift and Pope were of the Tories. Addison's poem, 'The Campaign,' on the victory of Blenheim, his imposing but frigid tragedy of Cato, and some other dramatic productions, besides various other writings in prose, have given him a reputation in many departments of literature; and Steele also holds a respectable rank among our comic dramatists as the author of the *Tender Husband* and the *Conscious Lovers*; but it is as the first, and on the whole the best, of our English essayists, the principal authors (in every sense) of the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian*, that these two writers have sent down their names with most honour to posterity, and have especially earned the love and gratitude of their countrymen. Steele was in his thirty-ninth, and his friend Addison in his thirty-eighth year, when the *Tatler* was started by the former in April, 1709. The paper, published thrice a week, had gone on for about six weeks before Addison took any part in it; but from that time he became, next to Steele, the chief contributor to it, till it was dropped in January, 1711. "I have only one gentleman," says Steele in his preface to the collected papers, "who will be nameless, to thank for any frequent assistance to me, which indeed it would have been barbarous in him to have denied to one with whom he has lived in an intimacy from childhood, considering the great ease with which he is able to dispatch the most entertaining pieces of this nature." The person alluded to is Addison. "This good office," Steele generously adds, "he performed with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a

distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid : I was undone by my auxiliary ; when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him." By far the greater part of the *Tatler*, however, is Steele's. Of 271 papers of which it consists, above 200 are attributed either entirely or in the greater part to him, while those believed to have been written by Addison are only about fifty. Among the other contributors Swift is the most frequent. The *Spectator* was begun within two months after the discontinuance of the *Tatler*, and was carried on at the rate of six papers a week till the 6th of December, 1712, on which day Number 555 was published. In these first seven volumes of the *Spectator* Addison's papers are probably more numerous than Steele's ; and between them they wrote perhaps four-fifths of the whole work. The *Guardian* was commenced on the 12th of March, 1713, and, being also published six times a week, had extended to 175 numbers, when it was brought to a close on the 1st of October in the same year. There is only one paper by Addison in the first volume of the *Guardian*, but to the second he was rather a more frequent contributor than Steele. This was the last work in which the two friends joined ; for Addison, we believe, wrote nothing in the *Englishman*, the fifty-seven numbers of which were published, at the rate of three a week, between the 6th of October, 1713, and the 15th of February following ; nor Steele any of the papers, eighty in number, forming the eighth volume of the *Spectator*, of which the first was published on the 18th of June, 1714, the last on the 20th of December in the same year, the rate of publication being also three times a week. Of these

additional Spectators twenty-four are attributed to Addison. The friendship of nearly half a century which had united these two admirable writers was rent asunder by political differences some years before the death of Addison, in 1719: Steele survived till 1729.

Invented or introduced among us as the periodical essay may be said to have been by Steele and Addison, it is a species of writing, as already observed, in which perhaps they have never been surpassed, or on the whole equalled, by any one of their many followers. More elaboration and depth, and also more brilliancy, we may have had in some recent attempts of the same kind; but hardly so much genuine liveliness, ease, and cordiality, anything so thoroughly agreeable, so skilfully adapted to interest without demanding more attention than is naturally and spontaneously given to it. Perhaps so large an admixture of the speculative and didactic was never made so easy of apprehension and so entertaining, so like in the reading to the merely narrative. But, besides this constant atmosphere of the pleasurable arising simply from the lightness, variety, and urbanity of these delightful papers, the delicate imagination and exquisite humour of Addison, and the vivacity, warmheartedness, and altogether generous nature of Steele, give a charm to the best of them, which is to be enjoyed, not described. We not only admire the writers, but soon come to love them, and to regard both them and the several fictitious personages that move about in the other little world they have created for us as among our best and best known friends.

SHAFTESBURY.

Among the prose works of the early part of the last century, which used to have the highest reputation for purity and elegance of style, is that by Lord Shaftesbury entitled 'Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Things.' Its author, Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, was born in 1671 and died in 1713; and the Characteristics, which did not appear in its present form, or with that title, till after his death, consists of a collection of disquisitions on various questions in moral, metaphysical, and critical philosophy, most of which he had previously published separately. We have nothing to do here with the philosophical system of Lord Shaftesbury, of which, whatever may its defects, the spirit is at least pure, lofty, and tolerant; but as a specimen of his style we will transcribe a single short passage from the most considerable of the treatises that form his first volume, that which he calls 'Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author,' first printed in 1710. The passage we have selected will also be found curious as a sample of Shakspearian criticism at that day, and for the remarks it contains on the tragedy of Hamlet, about which so much has been written in more recent times:—

Let our authors or poets complain ever so much of the genius of our people, 'tis evident we are not altogether so barbarous or gothic as they pretend. We are naturally no ill soil, and have musical parts which might be cultivated with great advantage, if these gentlemen would use the art of masters in their composition. They have power to work upon our better inclinations, and may know by certain tokens that their audience is disposed to receive nobler subjects, and taste a better manner, than that which, through indulgence to themselves more


than to the world, they are generally pleased to make their choice.

Besides some laudable attempts which have been made with tolerable success, of late years, towards a just manner of writing, both in the heroic and familiar style, we have older proofs of a right disposition in our people towards the moral and instructive way. Our old dramatic poet* may witness for our good ear and manly relish. Notwithstanding his natural rudeness, his unpolished style, his antiquated phrase and wit, his want of method and coherence, and his deficiency in almost all the graces and ornaments of this kind of writings; yet by the justness of his moral, the aptness of many of his descriptions, and the plain and natural turn of several of his characters, he pleases his audience, and often gains their ear, without a single bribe from luxury or vice. That piece of his,† which appears to have most affected English hearts, and has perhaps been oftenest acted of any which have come upon our stage, is almost one continued moral; a series of deep reflections, drawn from one mouth, upon the subject of one single accident and calamity, naturally fitted to move horror and compassion. It may be properly said of this play, if I mistake not, that it has only one character or principal part. It contains no adoration or flattery to the sex; no ranting at the gods; no blustering heroism; nor anything of that curious mixture of the fierce and tender which makes the hinge of modern tragedy, and nicely varies it between the points of love and honour.

Upon the whole, since in the two great poetic stations, the epic and dramatic, we may observe the moral genius so naturally prevalent; since our most approved heroic poem‡ has neither the softness of language nor the fashionable turn of wit, but merely solid thought, strong reasoning, noble passion, and a continued thread of moral doctrine, piety, and virtue to recommend it; we may justly infer that it is not so much the public ear,

* Shakspeare.

† The tragedy of Hamlet.

‡ Milton's Paradise Lost. 

as the ill hand and vicious manner of our poets, which needs redress.

And thus at last we are returned to our old article of advice : that main preliminary, of self-study and inward converse, which we have found so much wanting in the authors of our time. They should add the wisdom of the heart to the talk and exercise of the brain, in order to bring proportion and beauty into their works. That their composition and vein of writing may be natural and free, they should settle matters in the first place with themselves. And, having gained a mastery here, they may easily, with the help of their genius, and a right use of art, command their audience, and establish a good taste.

MANDEVILLE.

But the most remarkable philosophical work of this time, at least in a literary point of view, is Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*. Bernard de Mandeville was a native of Holland, in which country he was born about the year 1670 ; but, after having studied medicine and taken his doctor's degree, he came over to England about the end of that century, and he resided here till his death in 1733. His *Fable of the Bees* originally appeared in 1708, in the form of a poem of 400 lines in octosyllabic verse, entitled 'The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves turned Honest,' and it was not till eight years afterwards that he added the prose notes which make the bulk of the first volume of the work as we now have it. The second volume, or part, which consists of a series of six dialogues, was not published till 1729. The leading idea of the book is indicated by its second title, "Private Vices Public Benefits ;"—in other words, what are called and what really are vices in themselves, and in the individual indulging them, are nevertheless, in many respects,

serviceable to the community. Mandeville holds in fact, to quote the words in which he sums up his theory at the close of his first volume, "that neither the friendly qualities and kind affections that are natural to man, nor the real virtues he is capable of acquiring by reason and self-denial, are the foundation of society ; but that what we call evil in this world, moral as well as natural, is the grand principle that makes us sociable creatures, the solid basis, the life and support of all trades and employments without exception ; that there we must look for the true origin of all arts and sciences ; and that the moment evil ceases the society must be spoiled, if not totally destroyed." The doctrine had a startling appearance thus nakedly announced ; and the book occasioned a great commotion ; but it is now generally admitted that, whatever may be the worth or worthlessness of the philosophical system propounded in it, the author's object was not an immoral one. Independently altogether of its general principles and conclusions, the work is full both of curious matter and vigorous writing. As it is one of the books more talked of than generally known, we will make room for a few extracts. Our first shall be a part of the exposition of the evil and the good of gin-drinking—an English popular vice which, we may just remark, was carried in that day to a much greater excess than at present, whatever certain modern indications, viewed by themselves, might lead us to think :—

Nothing is more destructive, either in regard to the health or the vigilance and industry of the poor, than the infamous liquor, the name of which, derived from juniper berries in Dutch, is now by frequent use, and the laconic spirit of the nation, from a word of middling length shrunk into a monosyllable, intoxicating Gin, that

charms the inactive, the desperate and crazy of either sex, and makes the starving not behold his rags and nakedness with stupid indolence, or banter both in senseless laughter and more insipid jests : it is a fiery lake, that sets the brain in flame, burns up the entrails, and scorches every part within ; and at the same time a Lethe of oblivion, in which the wretch immersed drowns his most pinching cares, and, with his reason, all anxious reflection on brats that cry for food, hard winters, frosts, and horrid empty home.

In hot and adust tempers, it makes men quarrelsome, renders 'em brutes and savages, sets 'em on to fight for nothing, and has often been the cause of murder. I has broke and destroyed the strongest constitutions, thrown 'em into consumptions, and been the fatal and immediate occasion of apoplexies, frenzies, and sudden death. But, as these latter mischiefs happen but seldom, they might be overlooked and connived at ; but this cannot be said of the many diseases that are familiar to the liquor, and which are daily and hourly produced by it : such as loss of appetite, fevers, black and yellow jaundice, convulsions, stone and gravel, dropsies, and leucophlegmacies.

Among the doating admirers of this liquid poison, many of the meanest rank, from a sincere affection to the commodity itself, become dealers in it, and take delight to help others to what they love themselves. But, as these starvelings commonly drink more than their gains, they seldom by selling mend the wretchedness of condition they laboured under whilst they were only buyers. In the fag-end and outskirts of the town, and all places of the vilest resort, it is sold in some part or other of almost every house, frequently in cellars, and sometimes in the garret. The petty traders in this Stygian comfort are supplied by others in somewhat higher station, that keep professed brandy shops, and are as little to be envied as the former ; and among the middling people I know not a more miserable shift for a livelihood than their calling. Whoever would thrive in it must, in the first place, be of a watchful and sus-

picious as well as a bold and resolute temper, that he may not be imposed upon by cheats and sharpers, nor out-bullied by the oaths and imprecations of hackney-coachmen and foot-soldiers ; in the second, he ought to be a dabster at gross jokes and loud laughter, and have all the winning ways to allure customers, and draw out their money, and be well versed in the low jests and raileries the mob make use of to banter prudence and frugality. He must be affable and obsequious to the most despicable ; always ready and officious to help a porter down with his load, shake hands with a basket-woman, pull off his hat to an oyster-wench, and be familiar with a beggar ; with patience and good humour he must be able to endure the filthy actions and viler language of nasty drabs and the loudest rake-hells, and without a frown or the least aversion bear with all the stench and squalor, noise and impertinence, that the utmost indigence, laziness, and ebriety can produce in the most shameless and abandoned vulgar.

The vast number of the shops I speak of throughout the city and suburbs are an astonishing evidence of the many seducers that in a lawful occupation are necessary to the introduction and increase of all the sloth, sottishness, want, and misery, which the abuse of strong waters is the immediate cause of, to lift above mediocrity perhaps half a score men that deal in the same commodity by wholesale ; whilst among the retailers, though qualified as I required, a much greater number are broke and ruined, for not abstaining from the Circean cup they hold out to others, and the more fortunate are their whole life-time obliged to take the uncommon pains, endure the hardships, and swallow all the ungrateful and shocking things I named, for little or nothing beyond a bare sustenance and their daily bread.

The shortsighted vulgar, in the chain of causes, can seldom see further than one link ; but those who can enlarge their view, and will give themselves the leisure of gazing on the prospect of concatenated events, may, in a hundred places, see good spring up and pullulate from evil, naturally as chickens do from eggs. The money that

arises from the duties upon malt is a considerable part of the national revenue ; and, should no spirits be distilled from it, the public treasure would prodigiously suffer on that head. But, if we would set in a true light the many advantages, and large catalogue of solid blessings, that accrue from and are owing to the evil I treat of, we are to consider the rents that are received, the ground that is tilled, the tools that are made, the cattle that are employed, and, above all, the multitude of poor that are maintained by the variety of labour required in husbandry, in malting, in carriage, and distillation, before we can have that produce of malt which we call Low Wines, and is but the beginning from which the various spirits are afterwards to be made.

Besides this, a sharp-sighted good-humoured man might pick up abundance of good from the rubbish which I have all flung away for evil. He would tell me, that, whatever sloth and sottishness might be occasioned by the abuse of malt spirits, the moderate use of it was of inestimable benefit to the poor, who could purchase no cordials of higher prices ; that it was a universal comfort, not only in cold and weariness, but most of the afflictions that are peculiar to the necessitous, and had often to the most destitute supplied the places of meat, drink, clothes, and lodging. That the stupid indolence in the most wretched condition occasioned by those composing draughts, which I complained of, was a blessing to thousands ; for that certainly those were the happiest who felt the least pain. As to diseases, he would say that, as it caused some, so it cured others, and that, if the excess in those liquors had been sudden death to some few, the habit of drinking them daily prolonged the lives of many whom once it agreed with ; that, for the loss sustained from the insignificant quarrels it created at home, we were overpaid in the advantage we received from it abroad, by upholding the courage of soldiers and animating the sailors to the combat ; and that in the two last wars no considerable victory had been obtained without it.

This reasoning will probably not seem very forcible either to the moralists or the political economists of our day ; and the passage is by no means to be taken as an example of the most ingenious and original strain of thinking to be found in the book. Its interest lies in the vividness with which it describes what is still unhappily a very remarkable feature of our social condition as it presented itself a century ago. The following remarks are more striking for their peculiarity and penetration :—

Clothes were originally made for two ends ; to hide our nakedness, and to fence our bodies against the weather and other outward injuries. To these our boundless pride has added a third, which is ornament ; for what else but an excess of stupid vanity could have prevailed upon our reason to fancy that ornamental which must continually put us in mind of our wants and misery beyond all other animals, that are ready-clothed by nature herself ? It is indeed to be admired how so sensible a creature as man, that pretends to so many fine qualities of his own, should condescend to value himself upon what is robbed from so innocent and defenceless an animal as a sheep, or what he is beholden for to the most insignificant thing upon earth, a dying worm ; yet, whilst he is proud of such trifling depredations, he has the folly to laugh at the Hottentots on the farthest promontory of Africa, who adorn themselves with the guts of their dead enemies, without considering that they are the ensigns of their valour those barbarians are fine with, the true *spolia opima*, and that, if their pride be more savage than ours, it is certainly less ridiculous, because they wear the spoils of the more noble animal. . . .

Whoever takes delight in viewing the various scenes of low life may, on Easter, Whitsun, and other great holidays, meet with scores of people, especially women, of almost the lowest rank, that wear good and fashionable clothes : if, coming to talk with them, you treat them more courteously and with greater respect than

what they are conscious they deserve, they 'll commonly be ashamed of owning what they are; and often you may, if you are a little inquisitive, discover in them a most anxious care to conceal the business they follow, and the places they live in. The reason is plain: whilst they receive those civilities that are not usually paid them, and which they think only due to their betters, they have the satisfaction to imagine that they appear what they would be, which to weak minds is a pleasure almost as substantial as they could reap from the very accomplishments of their wishes; this golden dream they are unwilling to be disturbed in; and, being sure that the meanness of their condition, if it is known, must sink 'em very low in your opinion, they hug themselves in their disguise, and take all imaginable precaution not to forfeit by a useless discovery the esteem which they flatter themselves that their good clothes have drawn from you.

The poorest labourer's wife in the parish, who scorns to wear a strong wholesome frieze, as she might, will half starve herself and her husband to purchase a second-hand gown and petticoat, that cannot do her half the service; because, forsooth, it is more genteel. The weaver, the shoemaker, the tailor, the barber, and every mean working fellow that can set up with little, has the impudence, with the first money he gets, to dress himself like a tradesman of substance. The ordinary retailer, in the clothing of his wife, takes pattern from his neighbour, that deals in the same commodity by wholesale, and the reason he gives for it is, that twelve years ago the other had not a bigger shop than himself. The druggist, mercer, draper, and other creditable shopkeepers can find no difference between themselves and merchants, and therefore dress and live like them. The merchant's lady, who cannot bear the assurance of those mechanics, flies for refuge to the other end of the town, and scorns to follow any fashion but what she takes from thence. This haughtiness alarms the court; the women of quality are frightened to see merchants' wives and daughters dressed like themselves; this impudence of

the city, they cry, is intolerable; mantua-makers are sent for, and the contrivance of fashions becomes all their study, that they may have always new modes ready to take up as soon as those saucy cits shall begin to imitate those in being. The same emulation is continued through the several degrees of quality to an incredible expence, till at last the prince's great favourites, and those of the first rank of all, having nothing else left to outstrip some of their inferiors, are forced to lay out vast estates in pompous equipages, magnificent furniture, sumptuous gardens, and princely palaces. . . .

The choleric city captain seems impatient to come to action, and, expressing his warlike genius by the firmness of his steps, makes his pike, for want of exercise, tremble at the valour of his arm: his martial finery, as he marches along, inspires him with an unusual elevation of mind, by which, endeavouring to forget his shop as well as himself, he looks up at the balconies with the fierceness of a Saracen conqueror; whilst the phlegmatic alderman, now become venerable both for his age and his authority, contents himself with being thought a considerable man; and, knowing no easier way to express his vanity, looks big in his coach, where, being known by his paltry livery, he receives, in sullen state, the homage that is paid him by the meaner sort of people.

The beardless ensign counterfeits a gravity above his years, and, with a ridiculous assurance, strives to imitate the stern countenance of his colonel, flattering himself all the while that by his daring mien you'll judge of his powers. The youthful fair, in a vast concern of being overlooked, by the continual changing of her posture betrays a violent desire of being observed, and, catching, as it were, at every body's eyes, courts, with obliging looks, the admiration of her beholders. The conceited coxcomb, on the contrary, displaying an air of sufficiency, is wholly taken up with the contemplation of his own perfections, and in public places discovers such a disregard to others that the ignorant must imagine he thinks himself to be alone.

These and such like are all manifest, though differ-

ent, tokens of pride, that are obvious to all the world ; but man's vanity is not always so soon found out. When we perceive an air of humanity, and men seem not to be employed in admiring themselves, nor altogether unmindful of others, we are apt to pronounce 'em void of pride, when perhaps they are only fatigued with gratifying their vanity, and become languid from a satiety of enjoyments. That outward show of peace within, and drowsy composure of careless negligence, with which a great man is often seen in his plain chariot to roll at ease, are not always so free from art as they may seem to be. *Nothing is more ravishing to the proud than to be thought happy.*

The well-bred gentleman places his greatest pride in the skill he has of covering it with dexterity, and some are so expert in concealing this frailty, that when they are the most guilty of it the vulgar think them the most exempt from it. Thus, the dissembling courtier, when he appears in state, assumes an air of modesty and good humour ; and, whilst he is ready to burst with vanity, seems to be wholly ignorant of his greatness ; well knowing that those lovely qualities must heighten him in the esteem of others, and be an addition to that grandeur which the coronets about his coach and harnesses, with the rest of his equipage, cannot fail to proclaim without his assistance.

And, as in these pride is overlooked because industriously concealed, so in others again it is denied that they have any when they show, or at least seem to show, it in the most public manner. The wealthy parson, being, as well as the rest of his profession, debarred from the gaiety of laymen, makes it his business to look out for an admirable black and the finest cloth that money can purchase, and distinguishes himself by the fulness of his noble and spotless garment ; his wigs are as fashionable as that form he is forced to comply with will admit of ; but, as he is only stinted in their shape, so he takes care that for goodness of hair and colour few noblemen shall be able to match 'em ; his body is ever clean, as well as his clothes ; his sleek face is kept constantly

shaved, and his handsome nails are diligently pared ; his smooth white hand and a brilliant of the first water, mutually becoming, honour each other with double graces ; what linen he discovers is transparently curious, and he scorns ever to be seen abroad with a worse beaver than what a rich banker would be proud of on his wedding day ; to all these niceties in dress he adds a majestic gait, and expresses a commanding loftiness in his carriage ; yet common civility, notwithstanding the evidence of so many concurring symptoms, won't allow us to suspect any of his actions to be the result of pride ; considering the dignity of his office, it is only decency in him what would be vanity in others ; and, in good manners to his calling, we ought to believe that the worthy gentleman, without any regard to his reverend person, put himself to all this trouble and expence merely out of a respect which is due to the divine order he belongs to, and a religious zeal to preserve his holy function from the contempt of scoffers. With all my heart : nothing of all this shall be called pride ; let me only be allowed to say that to our human capacities it looks very like it.

But, if at last I should grant that there are men who enjoy all the fineries of equipage and furniture, as well as clothes, and yet have no pride in them, it is certain that, if all should be such, that emulation I spoke of before must cease, and consequently trade, which has so great a dependence upon it, suffer in every branch. For to say that, if all men were truly virtuous, they might, without any regard to themselves, consume as much out of zeal to serve their neighbours and promote the public good, as they do now out of self-love and emulation, is a miserable shift and an unreasonable supposition. As there have been good people in all ages, so, without doubt, we are not destitute of them in this ; but let us inquire of the periwig-makers and tailors in what gentlemen, even of the greatest wealth and highest quality, they ever could discover such public-spirited views ? Ask the lacemen, the mercers, and the linen-drapers, hether the richest, and, if you will, the most virtuous

ladies, if they buy with ready money, or intend to pay in any reasonable time, will not drive from shop to shop, to try the market, make as many words, and stand as hard with them to save a groat or sixpence in a yard, as the most necessitous jilts in town. If it be urged that, if there are not, it is possible there might be such people, I answer that it is possible that cats, instead of killing rats and mice, should feed them, and go about the house to suckle and nurse their young ones; or that a kite should call the hens to their meat, as the cock does, and sit brooding over their chickens instead of devouring 'em; but, if they should all do so, they would cease to be cats and kites: it is inconsistent with their natures; and the species of creatures which now we mean when we name cats and kites would be extinct as soon as that could come to pass.

Mandeville, it will be perceived, is no flatterer of human nature; his book, indeed, is written throughout in a spirit not only satirical, but cynical. Every page, however, bears the stamp of independent thinking; and many of the remarks he throws out indicate that he had at least glimpses of views which were not generally perceived or suspected at that day. It would probably be found that the Fable of the Bees has been very serviceable in the way of suggestion to various subsequent writers who have not adopted the general principles of the work. The following paragraphs, for example, are remarkable as an anticipation of a famous passage in the *Wealth of Nations*:—

If we trace the most flourishing nations in their origin, we shall find, that, in the remote beginnings of every society, the richest and most considerable men among them were a great while destitute of a great many comforts of life that are now enjoyed by the meanest and most humble wretches; so that many things which were once looked upon as the inventions of luxury are now

allowed even to those that are so miserably poor as to become the objects of public charity, nay counted so necessary that we think no human creature ought to want them. . . . A man would be laughed at that should discover luxury in the plain dress of a poor creature that walks along in a thick parish gown, and a coarse shirt underneath it; and yet what a number of people, how many different trades, and what a variety of skill and tools must be employed to have the most ordinary Yorkshire cloth? What depth of thought and ingenuity, what toil and labour, and what length of time must it have cost, before man could learn from a seed to raise and prepare so useful a product as linen? *Remark T. Vol. i. pp. 182-183 (edit. of 1724).*

What a bustle is there to be made in several parts of the world before a fine scarlet or crimson cloth can be produced; what multiplicity of trades and artificers must be employed! Not only such as are obvious, as wool-combers, spinners, the weaver, the cloth-worker, the scourer, the dyer, the setter, the drawer, and the packer; but others that are more remote, and might seem foreign to it,—as the mill-wright, the pewterer, and the chemist, which yet are all necessary, as well as a great number of other handicrafts, to have the tools, utensils, and other implements belonging to the trades already named. But all these things are done at home, and may be performed without extraordinary fatigue or danger; the most frightful prospect is left behind, when we reflect on the toil and hazard that are to be undergone abroad, the vast seas we are to go over, the different climates we are to endure, and the several nations we must be obliged to for their assistance. Spain alone, it is true, might furnish us with wool to make the finest cloth; but what skill and pains, what experience and ingenuity, are required to dye it of those beautiful colours! How widely are the drugs and other ingredients dispersed through the universe that are to meet in one kettle! Alum, indeed, we have of our own; argot we might have from the Rhine, and vitriol from Hungary: all this is in Europe. But then for salt-tre in quantity we are forced to go as far as the East

Indies. Cochenil, unknown to the ancients, is not much nearer to us, though in a quite different part of the earth; we buy it, 'tis true, from the Spaniards; but, not being their product, they are forced to fetch it for us from the remotest corner of the new world in the West Indies. Whilst so many sailors are broiling in the sun and sweltered with heat in the East and West of us, another set of them are freezing in the North to fetch potashes from Russia. *Search into the Nature of Society (appended to the second edition)*, pp. 411-413.

In another place, indeed (*Remark Q*, pp. 213-216), Mandeville almost enunciates one of the great leading principles of Smith's work: after showing how a nation might be undone by too much money, he concludes, "Let the value of gold and silver either rise or fall, the enjoyment of all societies will ever depend upon the fruits of the earth and the *labour* of the people; both which joined together are a more certain, a more inexhaustible, and a more real treasure than the gold of Brazil or the silver of Potosi." It might be conjectured also from some of his other writings that Smith was a reader of Mandeville: the following sentence, for instance (*Remark C*, p. 55), may be said almost to contain the germ of the Theory of the Moral Sentiments:—"That we are often ashamed and blush for others . . . is nothing else but that sometimes we make the case of others too nearly our own;—so people shriek out when they see others in danger:—whilst we are reflecting with too much earnest on the effect which such a blameable action, if it was ours, would produce in us, the spirits, and consequently the blood, are insensibly moved after the same manner as if the action was our own, and so the same symptoms must appear."

GAY.—ARBUTHNOT.—ATTERBURY.

Along with Pope, as we have seen, Swift numbers among those who would most mourn his death, Gay and Arbuthnot. He survived them both, Gay having died, in his forty-fourth year, in 1732, and Arbuthnot at a much more advanced age in 1735. John Gay, the author of a considerable quantity of verse and of above a dozen dramatic pieces, is now chiefly remembered for his *Beggar's Opera*, his *Fables*, his mock-heroic poem of *Trivia*, or the *Art of Walking the Streets of London*, and some of his ballads. He has no pretensions to any elevation of genius, but there is an agreeable ease, nature, and sprightliness in everything he has written; and the happiest of his performances are animated by an archness, and light but spirited raillery, in which he has not often been excelled. His celebrated English opera, as it was the first attempt of the kind, still remains the only one that has been eminently successful. Now, indeed, that much of the wit has lost its point and application to existing characters and circumstances, the dialogue of the play, apart from the music, may be admitted to owe its popularity in some degree to its traditionary fame; but still what is temporary in it is intermixed with a sufficiently diffused, though not very rich, vein of general satire, to allow the whole to retain considerable piquancy. Even at first the *Beggar's Opera* was probably indebted for the greater portion of its success to the music, and that is so happily selected that it continues still as fresh and as delightful as ever. Dr. John Arbuthnot, a native of Scotland, besides various professional works of much ability, is generally regarded as the author of the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, printed in the works of Pope and

Swift, and said to have been intended as the commencement of a general satire on the abuses of learning, of which, however, nothing more was ever written except Pope's treatise already mentioned on the Bathos, and one or two shorter fragments. The celebrated political satire, entitled *The History of John Bull*, which has been the model of various subsequent imitations, but of none in which the fiction is at once so apposite and so ludicrous, is also attributed to Arbuthnot. Pope's highly wrought and noble Prologue to his Satires, which is addressed to Arbuthnot, or rather in which the latter figures as the poet's interlocutor, will for ever preserve both the memory of their friendship, and also some traits of the character and manner of the learned, witty, and kind-hearted physician. The commencement of the reign of the Whigs at the accession of the House of Hanover, which deprived Arbuthnot of his appointment of one of the physicians extraordinary—leaving him, however, in the poet's words,

social, cheerful, and serene,

And just as rich as when he served a queen—

was more fatal to the fortunes of another of Pope's Tory or Jacobite friends, Francis Atterbury, the celebrated Bishop of Rochester, already mentioned as the principal author of the reply to Bentley's *Dissertation on Phalaris*. Atterbury also took a distinguished part in the professional controversies of his day, and his sermons and letters, and one or two short copies of verse by him, are well known; but his fervid character probably flashed out in conversation in a way of which we do not gather any notion from his writings. Atterbury was deprived and outlawed in 1722; and he died abroad in 1731, in his sixty-ninth year.

PRIOR.—PARNELL.

Matthew Prior is another distinguished name in the band of the Tory writers of this age, and he was also an associate of Pope and Swift, although we hear less of him in their epistolary correspondence than of most of their other friends. Yet perhaps no one of the minor wits and poets of the time has continued to enjoy higher or more general favour with posterity. Much that he wrote, indeed, is now forgotten; but some of the best of his comic tales in verse will live as long as the language, which contains nothing that surpasses them in the union of ease and fluency with sprightliness and point, and in all that makes up the spirit of humorous and graceful narrative. They are our happiest examples of a style that has been cultivated with more frequent success by French writers than by our own. Prior, who was born in 1664, commenced poet before the Revolution, by the publication in 1688 of his *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, written in concert with Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax, in ridicule of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*; and he continued a Whig nearly to the end of the reign of William; but he then joined the most extreme section of the Tories, and acted cordially with that party down to his death in 1721. Such also was the political course of Parnell, only that, being a younger man, he did not make his change of party till some years after Prior. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Parnell was born at Dublin in 1679, and left his original friends the Whigs at the same time with Swift, on the ejection of Lord Godolphin's ministry, in 1710. He died in 1718. Parnell is always an inoffensive and agreeable writer, and sometimes, as, for example, in his *Nightpiece on Death*,

which probably suggested Gray's more celebrated Elegy, he rises to considerable impressiveness and solemn pathos. But, although his poetry is uniformly fluent and transparent, and its general spirit refined and delicate, it has little warmth or richness, and can only be called a sort of water-colour poetry. One of Parnell's pieces, we may remark,—his Fairy Tale of Edwin and Sir Topaz,—may have given some hints to Burns for his Tam o' Shanter.

BOLINGBROKE.

The mention of Prior naturally suggests that of his friend and patron, and also the friend of Swift and Pope—Henry St. John, better known by his title of the Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, although his era comes down to a later date, for he was not born till 1678, and he lived to 1751. Bolingbroke wrote no poetry, but his collected prose works fill five quarto volumes (without including his letters), and would thus entitle him by their quantity alone to be ranked as one of the most considerable writers of his time; of which we have abundant testimony that he was one of the most brilliant orators and talkers, and in every species of mere cleverness one of the most distinguished figures. His writings, being principally on subjects of temporary politics, have lost much of their interest; but a few of them, especially his Letters on the Study and Use of History, his Idea of a Patriot King, and his account and defence of his own conduct in his famous Letter to Sir William Windham, will still reward perusal even for the sake of their matter, while in style and manner almost everything he has left is of very remarkable merit. Bolingbroke's style, as we have elsewhere observed, "was a happy medium between that

of the scholar and that of the man of society—or rather it was a happy combination of the best qualities of both, heightening the ease, freedom, fluency, and liveliness of elegant conversation with many of the deeper and richer tones of the eloquence of formal orations and of books. The example he thus set has probably had a very considerable effect in moulding the style of popular writing among us since his time.”*

Bolingbroke's elaborate defence of his own political course in his Letter to Sir William Windham (which is of great length, making a volume of above 300 pages) involves the wholesale condemnation of every person with whom or in whose service he had ever acted, beginning with the Earl of Oxford (Harley) and ending with the Pretender. The following is a part of what he says of the former:—

These were in general the views of the Tories [in 1710]; and for the part I acted in the prosecution of them, as well as of all the measures accessory to them, I may appeal to mankind. To those who had the opportunity of looking behind the curtain I may likewise appeal for the difficulties which lay in my way, and for the particular discouragements which I met with. A principal load of parliamentary and foreign affairs in their ordinary course lay upon me: the whole negotiation of the peace, and of the troublesome invidious steps preliminary to it, as far as they could be transacted at home, were thrown upon me. I continued in the House of Commons during that important session which preceded the peace; and which, by the spirit shown through the whole course of it, and by the resolutions taken in it, rendered the conclusion of the treaties practicable. After this I was dragged into the House of Lords, in such a manner as to make my promotion a punishment,

* Article on Bolingbroke in Penny Cyclopædia, v. 78.

not a reward; and was there left to defend the treaties almost alone.

It would not have been hard to have forced the Earl of Oxford to use me better. His good intentions began to be very much doubted of: the truth is, no opinion of his sincerity had ever taken root in the party; and, which was worse perhaps for a man in his station, the opinion of his capacity began to fall apace. He was so hard pushed in the House of Lords in the beginning of one thousand seven hundred and twelve, that he had been forced, in the middle of the session, to persuade the Queen to make a promotion of twelve peers at once; which was an unprecedented and invidious measure, to be excused by nothing but the necessity, and hardly by that. In the House of Commons his credit was low, and my reputation very high. You know the nature of that assembly: they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose halloo they are used to be encouraged. I thought my mistress treated me ill: but the sense of that duty which I owed her came in aid of other considerations, and prevailed over my resentment. These sentiments, indeed, are so much out of fashion, that a man who avows them is in danger of passing for a bubble in the world: yet they were, in the conjuncture I speak of, the true motives of my conduct; and you saw me go on as cheerfully in the troublesome and dangerous work assigned me as if I had been under the utmost satisfaction. I began, indeed, in my heart, to renounce the friendship which till that time I had preserved inviolable for Oxford. I was not aware of all his treachery, nor of the base and little means which he employed then, and continued to employ afterwards, to ruin me in the opinion of the queen, and every where else. I saw, however, that he had no friendship for anybody, and that, with respect to me, instead of having the ability to render that merit which I endeavoured to acquire an addition of strength to himself, it became the object of his jealousy, and a reason for undermining me. He was the first spring of all our motion by his credit with the queen, and his concurrence

was necessary to every thing we did by his rank in the state : and yet this man seemed to be sometimes asleep, and sometimes at play. He neglected the thread of business ; which was carried on for that reason with less despatch and less advantage in the proper channels ; and he kept none in his own hands. He negotiated, indeed, by fits and starts, by little tools and indirect ways ; and thus his activity became as hurtful as his indolence ; of which I could produce some remarkable instances.

..... Whether this man ever had any determined view besides that of raising his family is, I believe, a problematical question in the world. My opinion is, that he never had any other. The conduct of a minister who proposes to himself a great and noble object, and who pursues it steadily, may seem for a while a riddle to the world ; especially in a government like ours, where numbers of men, different in their characters, and different in their interests, are at all times to be managed ; where public affairs are exposed to more accidents and greater hazards than in other countries ; and where, by consequence, he who is at the head of business will find himself often distracted by measures which have no relation to his purpose, and obliged to bend himself to things which are in some degree contrary to his main design. The ocean which environs us is an emblem of our government ; and the pilot and the minister are in similar circumstances. It seldom happens that either of them can steer a direct course, and they both arrive at their port by means which frequently seem to carry them from it. But, as the work advances, the conduct of him who leads it on with real abilities clears up, the appearing inconsistencies are reconciled, and, when it is once consummated, the whole shows itself so uniform, so plain, and so natural, that every dabbler in politics will be apt to think he could have done the same. But, on the other hand, a man who proposes no such object, who substitutes artifice in the place of ability, who, instead of leading parties, and governing accidents, is eternally agitated backwards and forwards by both, who begins every day something new and carries nothing on to per-

fection, may impose a while on the world ; but a little sooner or a little later the mystery will be revealed, and nothing will be found to be couched under it but a thread of pitiful expedients, the ultimate end of which never extended farther than living from day to day.

The following are some extracts from the conclusion of the Letter :—

The exile of the royal family, under Cromwell's usurpation, was the principal cause of all those misfortunes in which Britain has been involved, as well as of many of those which have happened to the rest of Europe, during more than half a century.

The two brothers, Charles and James, became then infected with popery to such degrees as their different characters admitted of. Charles had parts ; and his good understanding served as an antidote to repel the poison. James, the simplest man of his time, drank off the whole chalice. The poison met, in his composition, with all the fear, all the credulity, and all the obstinacy of temper proper to increase its virulence, and to strengthen its effect. The first had always a wrong bias upon him : he connived at the establishment, and indirectly contributed to the growth, of that power, which afterwards disturbed the peace and threatened the liberty of Europe so often ; but he went no farther out of the way. The opposition of his parliaments and his own reflections stopped him here. The prince and the people were indeed mutually jealous of one another, from which much present disorder flowed, and the foundation of future evils was laid ; but, his good and his bad principles combating still together, he maintained, during a reign of more than twenty years, in some tolerable degree, the authority of the crown and the flourishing estate of the nation. The last, drunk with superstitious and even enthusiastic zeal, ran headlong into his own ruin whilst he endeavoured to precipitate ours. His parliament and his people did all they could to save themselves by winning him. But all was vain : he had no principle on which they could take hold. Even his good qualities

worked against them, and his love of his country went halves with his bigotry. How he succeeded we have heard from our fathers. The revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight saved the nation, and ruined the king.

Now the Pretender's education has rendered him infinitely less fit than his uncle, and at least as unfit as his father, to be king of Great Britain. Add to this, that there is no resource in his understanding. Men of the best sense find it hard to overcome religious prejudices, which are of all the strongest; but he is a slave to the weakest. The rod hangs like the sword of Damocles over his head, and he trembles before his mother and his priest. What, in the name of God, can any member of the Church of England promise himself from such a character? Are we by another revolution to return into the same state from which we were delivered by the first? Let us take example from the Roman Catholics, who act very reasonably in refusing to submit to a Protestant prince. Henry the Fourth had at least as good a title to the throne of France as the Pretender has to ours. His religion alone stood in his way, and he had never been king if he had not removed that obstacle. Shall we submit to a popish prince, who will no more imitate Henry the Fourth in changing his religion, than he will imitate those shining qualities which rendered him the honestest gentleman, the bravest captain, and the greatest prince of his age?

It may be said, and it has been urged to me, that if the Chevalier was restored, the knowledge of his character would be our security; *foenum habet in cornu*;* there would be no pretence for trusting him, and by consequence it would be easy to put such restrictions on the exercise of the regal power as might hinder him from invading and sapping our religion and liberty. But this I utterly deny. Experience has shown us how ready men are to court power and profit; and who can

* He has a wisp of straw (the mark of a vicious animal) on his horn.—*Horace*.

determine how far either the Tories or the Whigs would comply in order to secure to themselves the enjoyment of all the places in the kingdom? Suppose, however, that a majority of true Israelites should be found whom no temptation could oblige to bow the knee to Baal; in order to preserve the government on one hand, must they not destroy it on the other? The necessary restrictions would in this case be so many, and so important, as to leave hardly the shadow of a monarchy, if he submitted to them; and, if he did not submit to them, these patriots would have no resource left but in rebellion. Thus, therefore, the affair would turn, if the Pretender was restored. We might most probably lose our religion and liberty by the bigotry of the prince and the corruption of the people. We should have no chance of preserving them, but by an entire change of the whole frame of our government, or by another revolution. What reasonable man would voluntarily reduce himself to the necessity of making an option among such melancholy alternatives?

Whilst the Pretender and his successors forbore to attack the religion and liberty of the nation, we should remain in the condition of those people who labour under a broken constitution, or who carry about with them some chronical distemper. They feel a little pain at every moment; or a certain uneasiness, which is sometimes less tolerable than pain, hangs continually on them, and they languish in the constant expectation of dying, perhaps in the severest torture.

But, if the fear of hell should dissipate all other fears in the Pretender's mind, and carry him, which is frequently the effect of that passion, to the most desperate undertakings; if among his successors a man bold enough to make the attempt should arise, the condition of the British nation would be still more deplorable. The attempt succeeding, we should fall into tyranny; for a change of religion could never be brought about by consent; and the same force that would be sufficient to enslave our consciences would be sufficient for all other purposes of arbitrary power. The attempt failing, we should fall into anarchy; for there is no medium when

disputes between a prince and his people are arrived at a certain point: he must either be submitted to or deposed.

GARTH.—BLACKMORE.

In one of the passages in which he commemorates the friendship of Swift, Atterbury, and Bolingbroke, Pope records also the encouragement his earliest performances in rhyme received from a poet and man of wit of the opposite party, "well-natured Garth."* Sir Samuel Garth, who was an eminent physician and a zealous Whig, is the author of various poetical pieces published in the reigns of William and Anne, of which the one of greatest pretension is that entitled *The Dispensary*, a mock epic, in six short cantos, on the quarrels of his professional brethren, which appeared in 1699. The wit of this slight performance may have somewhat evaporated with age, but it cannot have been at any time very pungent. A much more voluminous, and also more ambitious, Whig poet of this Augustan age, as it is sometimes called, of our literature, was another physician, Sir Richard Blackmore. Blackmore made his début as a poet so early as the year 1696, by the publication of his *Prince Arthur*, which was followed by a succession of other epics, or long poems of a serious kind, each in six, ten, or twelve books, under the names of *King Arthur*, *King Alfred*, *Eliza*, the Redeemer, the Creation, &c., besides a *Paraphrase of the Book of Job*, a new version of the *Psalms*, a *Satire on Wit*, and various shorter effusions both in verse and prose. The indefatigable rhymester—"the everlasting Blackmore," as

* See Prologue to the *Satires*, 135, &c.

Pope calls him—died at last in 1729. Nothing can be conceived exceeding in absurdity this incessant discharge of epics ; but Blackmore, whom Dryden charged with writing “ to the rumbling of his coach’s wheels,” may be pronounced, without any undue severity, to have been not more a fool than a blockhead. His *Creation*, indeed, has been praised both by Addison and Johnson ; but the politics of the author may be supposed to have blinded or mollified the one critic, and his piety the other ; at least the only thing an ordinary reader will be apt to discover in this his *chef d’œuvre*, that is not the flattest common-place, is an occasional outbreak of the most ludicrous extravagance and bombast. Altogether this knight, droning away at his epics for above a quarter of a century, is as absurd a phenomenon as is presented to us in the history of literature. Pope has done him no more than justice in assigning him the first place among the contending “ brayers ” at the immortal games instituted by the goddess of the Dunciad :—

But far o’er all, sonorous Blackmore’s strain :
Walls, steeples, skies, bray back to him again.
In Tot’ham fields the brethren, with amaze,
Prick all their ears up, and forget to graze ;
Long Chaucery-lane retentive rolls the sound,
And courts to courts return it round and round ;
Thames wafts it thence to Rufus’ roaring hall,
And Hungerford re-echoes bawl for bawl.
All hail him victor in both gifts of song,
Who sings so loudly and who sings so long.

DEFOE.

The Whigs, however, had to boast of one great writer of prose fiction, if, indeed, one who, although taking a frequent and warm part in the discussion of political sub-

jects, really stood aloof from and above all parties, and may be said to have been in enlargement of view far in advance of all the public men of his time, can be properly claimed by any party. Nor does Daniel Defoe seem to have been recognised as one of themselves by the Whigs of his own day. He stood up, indeed, from first to last, for the principles of the Revolution against those of the Jacobites ; but in the alternating struggle between the Whig and Tory parties for the possession of office he took little or no concern ; he served and opposed administrations of either colour without reference to anything but their measures : thus we find him in 1706 assisting Godolphin and his colleagues to compass the union with Scotland ; and in 1713 exerting himself with equal zeal in supporting Harley and Bolingbroke in the attempt to carry through their commercial treaty with France. He is believed to have first addressed himself to his countrymen through the press in 1683, when he was only in his twenty-third year. From this time for a space of above thirty years he may be said never to have laid down his pen as a political writer ; his publications in prose and verse, which are far too numerous to be here particularised, embracing nearly every subject which either the progress of events made of prominent importance during that time, or which was of eminent popular or social interest, independently of times and circumstances. Many of these productions, written for a temporary purpose, or on the spur of some particular occasion, still retain a considerable value even for their matter, either as directories of conduct or accounts of matters of fact ; some, indeed, such as his *History of the Union*, are the works of highest authority we possess re-

specting the transactions to which they relate ; all of them bear the traces of a sincere, earnest, manly character, and of an understanding unusually active, penetrating, and well-informed. Evidence enough there often is, no doubt, of haste and precipitation, but it is always the haste of a full mind ; the subject may be rapidly and somewhat rudely sketched out, and the matter not always very artificially disposed, or set forth to the most advantage ; but Defoe never wrote for the mere sake of writing, or unless when he really had something to state which he conceived it important that the public should know. He was too thoroughly honest for that. Defoe's course and character as a political writer bear a considerable resemblance in some leading points to those of one of the most remarkable men of our own day, the late William Cobbett, who, however, had certainly much more passion and wilfulness than Defoe, whatever we may think of his claims to as much principle. But Defoe's political writings make the smallest part of his literary renown. At the age of fifty-eight—an age when other writers, without the tenth part of his amount of performance to boast of, have usually thought themselves entitled to close their labours—he commenced a new life of authorship with all the spirit and hopeful alacrity of five-and-twenty. A succession of works of fiction, destined, some of them, to take and keep the highest rank in that department of our literature, and to become popular books in every language of Europe, now proceeded from his pen with a rapidity evincing the easiest flow as well as the greatest fertility of imagination. Robinson Crusoe appeared in 1719 ; the Dumb Philosopher, the same year ; Captain Singleton, in

1720 ; Duncan Campbell, the same year ; Moll Flanders, in 1721 ; Colonel Jacque, in 1722 ; the Journal of the Plague, and probably, also, the Memoirs of a Cavalier (to which there is no date), the same year ; the Fortunate Mistress, or Roxana, in 1724 ; the New Voyage Round the World, in 1725 ; and the Memoirs of Captain Carleton, in 1728. But these effusions of his inventive faculty seem to have been, after all, little more than the amusements of his leisure. In the course of the twelve years from 1719 to his death in 1731, besides his novels he produced about twenty miscellaneous works, many of them of considerable extent. It may be pretty safely affirmed that no one who has written so much has written so well. No writer of fictitious narrative has ever excelled him in at least one prime excellence—the air of reality which he throws over the creations of his fancy ; an effect proceeding from the strength of conception with which he enters into the scenes, adventures, and characters he undertakes to describe, and his perfect reliance upon his power of interesting the reader by the plainest possible manner of relating things essentially interesting. Truth and nature are never either improved by flowers of speech in Defoe, or smothered under that sort of adornment. In some of his political writings there are not wanting passages of considerable height of style, in which, excited by a fit occasion, he employs to good purpose the artifices of rhetorical embellishment and modulation ; but in his works of imagination the almost constant characteristic of his style is a simplicity and plainness, which, if there be any affectation about it at all, is chargeable only with that of a homeliness sometimes approaching to

rusticity. Yet it is full of idiomatic nerve, too, and in a high degree graphic and expressive; and even its occasional slovenliness, whether the result of carelessness or design, aids the illusion by which the fiction is made to read so like a matter of fact. The truthful air of Defoe's fictions, we may just remark, is of quite a different character from that of Swift's, in which, although there is also much of the same vivid conception, and therefore minutely accurate delineation, of every person and thing introduced, a discerning reader will always perceive a smile lurking beneath the author's assumed gravity, telling him intelligibly enough that the whole is a joke. It is said, indeed, that, as the *Journal of the Plague* is quoted as an authentic narrative by Dr. Mead, and as Lord Chatham was, in all simplicity, in the habit of recommending the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* to his friends as the best account of the Civil Wars, and as those of Captain Carleton were read even by Samuel Johnson without a suspicion of their being other than a true history, so some Irish bishop was found with faith enough to believe in *Gulliver's Travels*, although not a little amazed by some things stated in the book. But this instance of episcopal simplicity of character is probably unique.

DRAMATIC WRITERS.

To this age, too, belong three of the greatest of our comic dramatists. Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar were born in the order in which we have named them, and also, we believe, successively presented themselves before the public as writers for the stage in the same order, although they reversed it in making their exits

from the stage of life,—Farquhar dying in 1707 at the age of twenty-nine, Vanbrugh in 1726 at that of fifty-four, Congreve not till 1729 in his fifty-ninth or sixtieth year. Congreve's first play, *The Old Bachelor*, was brought out in 1693, the author having already, two or three years before, made himself known in the literary world by a novel called *The Incognita*, or *Love and Duty Reconciled*. *The Old Bachelor* was followed by *The Double Dealer* in 1694, and by *Love for Love* in 1695; the tragedy of *The Mourning Bride* was produced in 1697; and the comedy of *The Way of the World*, in 1700: a masquerade and an opera, both of slight importance, were the only dramatic pieces he wrote during the rest of his life. The comedy of Congreve has not much character, still less humour, and no nature at all; but blazes and crackles with wit and repartee, for the most part of an unusually pure and brilliant species,—not quaint, forced, and awkward, like what we find in some other attempts, in our dramatic literature and elsewhere, at the same kind of display, but apparently as easy and spontaneous as it is pointed, polished, and exact. His plots are also constructed with much artifice. Sir John Vanbrugh is the author of ten or twelve comedies, of which the first, *The Relapse*, was produced in 1697, and of which *The Provoked Wife*, *The Confederacy*, and *The Journey to London* (which last, left unfinished by the author, was completed by Colley Cibber), are those of greatest merit. The wit of Vanbrugh flows rather than flashes; but its copious stream may vie in its own way with the dazzling fire-shower of Congreve's; and his characters have much more of real flesh and blood in their composition, coarse and vicious as almost all the more

powerfully drawn among them are. George Farquhar, the author of *The Constant Couple* and *The Beaux Stratagem*, and of five or six other comedies, was a native of Ireiand, in which country Congreve also spent his childhood and boyhood. Farquhar's first play, his *Love in a Bottle*, was brought out with great success at Drury Lane in 1698; *The Beaux Stratagem*, his last, was in the midst of its run when the illness during which it had been written terminated in the poor author's early death. The thoughtless and volatile, but goodnatured and generous, character of Farquhar is reflected in his comedies, which, with less sparkle, have more natural life and airiness, and are animated by a finer spirit of whim, than those of either Vanbrugh or Congreve. His morality, like theirs, is abundantly free and easy; but there is much more heart about his profligacy than in theirs, as well as much less grossness or hardness. To these names may be added that of Colley Cibber, who has, however, scarcely any pretensions to be ranked as one of our classic dramatists, although, of about two dozen comedies, tragedies, and other pieces of which he is the author, his *Careless Husband* and one or two others may be admitted to be lively and agreeable. Cibber, who was born in 1671, produced his first play, the comedy of *Love's Last Shift*, in 1696, and was still an occasional writer for the stage after the commencement of the reign of George II.; one of his productions, indeed, his tragedy entitled *Papal Tyranny*, was brought out so late as the year 1745, when he himself performed one of the principal characters; and he lived till 1757. His well-known account of his own life, or his *Apology for his Life*, as he modestly or affectedly calls it, is an

amusing piece of something higher than gossip; the sketches he gives of the various celebrated actors of his time are many of them executed, not perhaps with the deepest insight, but yet with much graphic skill in so far as regards those mere superficial characteristics that meet the ordinary eye. The chief tragic writer of this age was Nicholas Rowe, the author of *The Fair Penitent* and *Jane Shore*, of five other tragedies, one comedy, and a translation in rhyme of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Rowe, who was born in 1673, and died in 1718, was esteemed in his own day a great master of the pathetic, but is now regarded as little more than a smooth and occasionally sounding versifier.

MINOR POETS.

The age of the first two Georges, if we put aside what was done by Pope, or consider him as belonging properly to the preceding reign of Anne, was not very prolific of poetry of a high order; but there are several minor poets belonging to this time whose names live in our literature, and some of whose productions are still read. Matthew Green's poem entitled *The Spleen* originally appeared, we believe, in his life-time in the first volume of Dodsley's *Collection*—although his other pieces, which are few in number and of little note, were only published by his friend Glover after the death of the author in 1737, at the age of forty-one. *The Spleen*, a reflective effusion in octo-syllabic verse, is somewhat striking from an air of originality in the vein of thought, and from the laboured concentration and epigrammatic point of the language: but, although it was much cried up when it first appeared, and the laudation has continued

to be duly echoed by succeeding criticism, it may be doubted if many readers could now make their way through it without considerable fatigue, or if it be much read in fact at all. With all its ingenious or energetic rhetorical posture-making, it has nearly as little real play of fancy as charm of numbers, and may be more properly characterised as a piece of bastard or perverted Hudibrastic—an imitation of the manner of Butler to the very dance of his verse, only without the comedy—the same antics, only solemnized or made to carry a moral and serious meaning. The *Grongar Hill* of Dyer was published in 1726, when its author was in his twenty-seventh year; and was followed by *The Ruins of Rome* in 1740, and the author's most elaborate performance, *The Fleece*, in 1757, the year before his death. Dyer's is a natural and true note, though not one of much power or compass. What he has written is his own; not borrowed from or suggested by "others' books," but what he has himself seen, thought, and felt. He sees, too, with an artistic eye—while at the same time his pictures are full of the moral inspiration which alone makes description poetry. There is also considerable descriptive power in Somervile's blank verse poem of *The Chase*, in four Books, which was first published in 1735. Somervile, who was a Warwickshire squire, and the intimate friend of Shenstone, and who, besides his *Chase*, wrote various other pieces, now for the most part forgotten, died in 1742. Tickell, Addison's friend, who was born in 1686 and lived till 1740, is the author of a number of compositions, of which his *Elegy on Addison* and his ballad of *Colin and Lucy* are the best known. The ballad *Gray* has called "the prettiest in the world"—and if prettiness,

by which Gray here probably means a certain easy simplicity and trimness, were the soul of ballad poetry, it might carry away a high prize. Nobody writes better grammar than Tickell. His style is always remarkably clear and exact, and the mere appropriateness and judicious collocation of the words, aided by the swell of the verse in his more elaborate or solemn passages, have sometimes an imposing effect. Of his famous elegy, the most opposite opinions have been expressed. Goldsmith has called it "one of the finest in our language;" and Johnson has declared that "a more sublime or elegant funeral poem is not to be found in the whole compass of English literature." Steele on the other hand has denounced it as being nothing more than "prose in rhyme." And it must be admitted that it is neither very tender nor very imaginative; yet rhyme too is part and parcel of poetry, and solemn thoughts, vigorously expressed and melodiously enough versified, which surely we have here, cannot reasonably be refused that name, even though the informing power of passion or imagination may not be present in any very high degree. One of Tickell's most spirited performances is perhaps his imitation or parody of Horace's Prophecy of Nereus (Book i. Ode 15), which he thus applied at the time to the Jacobite outbreak of 1715:—

As Mar his round one morning took
(Whom some call Earl and some call Duke),
And his new brethren of the blade,
Shivering with fear and frost, surveyed,
On Perth's bleak hills he chanced to spy
An aged wizard six feet high,
With bristled hair and visage blighted,
Wall-eyed, bare-haunched, and second sighted.

The grisly sage in thought profound
Beheld the chief with back so round,
Then rolled his eye-balls to and fro
O'er his paternal hills of snow ;
And into these tremendous speeches
Broke forth the prophet without breeches :—

“ Into what ills betrayed by thee
This ancient kingdom do I see !
Her realms unpeopled and forlorn !
Woe's me ! that ever thou wert born ;
Proud English loons (our clans o'ercome)
On Scottish pads shall amble home :
I see them drest in bonnets blue
(The spoils of thy rebellious crew) ;
I see the target cast away,
And checkered plaid, become their prey—
The checkered plaid to make a gown
For many a lass in London town.

“ In vain thy hungry mountaineers
Come forth in all their warlike geers,
The shield, the pistol, dirk and dagger,
In which they daily wont to swagger,
And oft have sallied out to pillage
The hen-roosts of some peaceful village,
Or, while their neighbours were asleep,
Have carried off a lowland sheep.

“ What boots thy highborn host of beggars,
Macleans, Mackenzies, and Macgregors,
With popish cut-throats, perjured ruffians,
And Foster's troop of raggamuffins ?

“ In vain thy lads around thee bandy,
Inflamed with bag-pipe and with brandy.
Doth not bold Sutherland the trusty,
With heart so true, and voice so rusty,
(A loyal soul) thy troops affright,
While hoarsely he demands the fight ?
Dost thou not generous Ilay dread,
The bravest hand, the wisest head ?
Undaunted dost thou hear the alarms
Of hoary Athol sheathed in arms ?

“ Douglas, who draws his lineage down
From thanes and peers of high renown,
Fiery, and young, and uncontrolled,

With knights, and squires, and barons bold,
 (His noble household-band) advances,
 And on the milk-white courser prances.
 Thee Forfar to the combat dares,
 Grown swarthy in Iberian wars;
 And Monroe, kindled into rage,
 Sourly defies thee to engage;
 He'll rout thy foot, though ne'er so many,
 And horse to boot—if thou hast any.

"But see Argyle, with watchful eyes,
 Lodged in his deep entrenchments lies;
 Couched like a lion in thy way,
 He waits to spring upon his prey;
 While, like a herd of timorous deer,
 Thy army shakes and pants with fear,
 Led by their doughty general's skill
 From frith to frith, from hill to hill.

"Is thus thy haughty promise paid
 That to the Chevalier was made,
 When thou didst oaths and duty barter
 For dukedom, generalship, and garter?
 Three moons thy Jemmy shall command,
 With highland sceptre in his hand,
 Too good for his pretended birth—
 Then down shall fall the King of Perth."

* * * * *

The notorious Richard Savage is the author of several poetical compositions, published in the last fifteen or twenty years of his tempestuous and unhappy life, which he closed in Bristol jail in 1743, at the age of forty-six. Savage's poem called *The Bastard* has some vigorous lines, and some touches of tenderness as well as bursts of more violent passion; but, as a whole, it is crude, spasmodic, and frequently wordy and languid. His other compositions, some of which evince a talent for satire, of which assiduous cultivation might have made something, have all passed into oblivion. The personal history of Savage, which Johnson's ardent and expanded narrative has made universally known, is more

interesting than his poetry ; but even that owes more than half its attraction to his biographer. He had, in fact, all his life, apparently, much more of another kind of madness than he ever had of that of poetry.

Fenton and Broome—the former of whom died in 1730 at the age of forty-seven, the latter in 1745 at what age is not known,—are chiefly remembered as Pope's coadjutors in his translation of the *Odyssey*. Johnson observes, in his *Life of Fenton*, that the readers of poetry have never been able to distinguish their Books from those of Pope ; but the account he has given here and in the *Life of Broome* of the respective shares of the three, on the information, as he says, of Mr. Langton, who had got it from Spence, may be reasonably doubted. It differs, indeed, in some respects from that given in Spence's *Anecdotes*, since published. A critical reader will detect very marked varieties of style and manner in the different parts of the work. It is very clear, for instance, that the nineteenth and twentieth Books are not by Pope, and have not even received much of his revision : they are commonly attributed to Fenton, and we believe rightly. But it is impossible to believe, on the other hand, that the translator of these two Books is also the translator of the whole of the fourth Book, which is likewise assigned to Fenton in Johnson's statement. Could any one except Pope have written the following lines, which occur in that Book ?—

But, oh beloved by heaven, reserved to thee,
A happier lot the smiling fates decree ;
Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway
Matter is changed, and varying forms decay,
Elysium shall be thine ; the blissful plains
Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.

Joys ever young, unmixed with pain or fear,
 Fill the wide circle of the eternal year:
 Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime,
 The fields are florid with unfading prime;
 From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
 Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow;
 But from the breezy deep the bless'd inhale
 The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.
 This grace peculiar will the Gods afford
 To thee, the son of Jove, the beauteous Helen's lord.

Pope, indeed, may have inserted this and other passages in this and other Books, of which he did not translate the whole. Broome was a much more dexterous versifier than Fenton, and would come much nearer to Pope's ordinary manner: still we greatly doubt if the twenty-third Book in particular (which passes for Broome's) be not entirely Pope's, and also many parts of the second, the eighth, the eleventh, and the twelfth. On the other hand, the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and twenty-fourth seem to us to be throughout more likely to be by him than by Pope. Pope himself seems to have looked upon Broome as rather a clever mimic of his own manner than as anything much higher. When they had quarrelled a few years after this, he introduced his old associate in the *Dunciad*, in a passage which originally ran:—

See under Ripley rise a new Whitehall,
 While Jones and Boyle's united labours fall;
 While Wren with sorrow to the grave descends,
 Gay dies unpensioned with a hundred friends;
 Hibernian politics, O Swift, thy doom,
 And Pope's, translating ten whole years with Broome.

It was pretended, indeed, in a note, that no harm was meant to poor Broome by this delicate crucifixion of him. Yet he is understood to be the W. B. who, in

the sixth chapter of the Art of Sinking in Poetry, entitled "Of the several kinds of geniuses in the Profound, and the marks and characters of each," heads the list of those described as "the Parrots, that repeat another's words in such a hoarse, odd voice, as makes them seem their own." And Broome, as Johnson has observed, is quoted more than once in the treatise as a proficient in the Bathos. Johnson adds, "I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship." The couplet in the Dunciad, at least, was ultimately altered to—

Hibernian politics, O Swift! thy fate,
And Pope's, ten years to comment and translate.

Both Broome and Fenton published also various original compositions in verse, but nothing that the world has not very willingly let die. Fenton, however, although his contributions to the translation of the Odyssey neither harmonize well with the rest of the work, nor are to be commended taken by themselves, had more force and truth of poetical feeling than many of his verse-making contemporaries: one of his pieces, his ode to Lord Gower, is not unmusical, ~~not~~ without a certain lyric glow and elevation.

Another small poet of this age is Ambrose Philips, whose Six Pastorals and tragedy of The Distressed Mother brought him vast reputation when they were first produced, but whose name has been kept in the recollection of posterity, perhaps, more by Pope's vindictive satire. An ironical criticism on the Pastorals in the Guardian, which took in Steele, who published it in the 40th number of that paper (for 27th April, 1713), was followed long afterwards by the unsparing ridicule

of the Treatise on the Art of Sinking in Poetry, in which many of the illustrations are taken from the rhymes of poor Philips, who is held up in one place as the great master both of the infantine and the inane in style, and is elsewhere placed at the head of the clan of writers designated the Tortoises, who are described as slow and dull, and, like pastoral writers, delighting much in gardens: "they have," it is added, "for the most part, a fine embroidered shell, and underneath it a heavy lump." Philips, in some of his later effusions, had gone, in pursuit of what he conceived to be nature and simplicity, into a style of writing in short verses with not overmuch meaning, which his enemies parodied under the name of Namby-pamby. On the whole, however, he had no great reason to complain: if his poetry was laughed at by Pope and the Tories, it was not only lauded, but very substantially rewarded by the Whigs, who not only made Philips a lottery commissioner and a justice of peace for Westminster, but continued to push him forward till he became member for the county of Armagh in the Irish parliament, and afterwards judge of the Irish Prerogative Court. His success in life is alluded to in the same part of the Dunciad where Broome is brought in—in the line,

Lo! Ambrose Philips is preferred for wit!

This Namby-pamby Philips, who was born in 1671, and lived till 1749, must not be confounded with John Philips, the author of the mock-heroic poem of the Splendid Shilling (published in 1703), and also of a poem in two books, in serious blank verse, entitled Cider, which has the reputation of being a good prac-

tical treatise on the brewing of that drink. John Philips, who published likewise a poem on the battle of Blenheim, in rivalry of Addison, was a Tory poet, and the affectation of simplicity, at least, cannot be laid to his charge, for what he aims at imitating or appropriating is not what is called the language of nature, but the swell and pomp of Milton. His serious poetry, however, is not worth much, at least as poetry. John Philips belongs to the preceding era, having been born in 1676, and having died in 1708.

Two or three more names may be merely mentioned. Leonard Welsted, who was born in 1689, and died in 1747, also, like Ambrose Philips, figures in the *Dunciad* and in the *Treatise of Martinus Scriblerus*, and produced a considerable quantity both of verse and prose, all now utterly forgotten. Thomas Yalden, who died a Doctor of Divinity in 1736, was a man of wit as well as the writer of a number of odes, elegies, hymns, fables, and other compositions in verse, of which one, entitled a *Hymn to Darkness*, is warmly praised by Dr. Johnson, who has given the author a place in his *Lives of the Poets*. In that work too may be found an account of Hammond, the author of the *Love Elegies*, who died in 1742, in his thirty-second year, driven mad, and eventually sent to his grave, it is affirmed, by the inexorable cruelty of the lady, a Miss Dashwood, who, under the name of Delia, is the subject of his verses, and who, we are told, survived him for thirty-seven years without finding any one else either to marry or fall in love with her. The character, as Johnson remarks, that Hammond bequeathed her was not likely to attract courtship. Hammond's poetry, however, reflects but coldly

the amorous fire which produced all this mischief: it is correct and graceful, but languid almost to the point of drowsiness. Gilbert West was born about 1705, and died in 1756: besides other verse, he published a translation of a portion of the odes of Pindar, which had long considerable reputation, but is not very Pindaric, though a smooth and sonorous performance. The one of his works that has best kept its ground is his prose tract entitled *Observations on the Resurrection*, a very able and ingenious disquisition, for which the university of Oxford made West a Doctor of Laws. Aaron Hill, who was born in 1685 and died in 1750, and who lies buried in Westminster Abbey, was at different periods of his life a traveller, a projector, a theatrical manager, and a literary man. He is the author of no fewer than seventeen dramatic pieces, original and translated, among which his versions of Voltaire's *Zaire* and *Merope* long kept possession of the stage. His poetry is in general both pompous and empty enough; and of all he has written, almost the only passage that is now much remembered is a satiric sketch of Pope, in a few lines, which have some imitative smartness, but scarcely any higher merit. Pope had offended him by putting him in the *Dunciad*, though the way in which he is mentioned is really complimentary to Hill. A good view of the character of Aaron Hill, who was an amiable and honourable man, although he overrated his own talents and importance, is to be got from the published correspondence of Richardson the novelist, in the first of the six volumes of which Hill's letters, extending from the year 1730 to 1748, fill about 130 pages. Mrs. Barbauld, by whom the collection was prepared for the press, was

not aware that in publishing two of these letters of Hill's, those given on pp. 53 and 55, she was letting out a literary secret. The letters, as given by her, are mutilated ; but they are in part the same with those published by Richardson himself at the head of the second edition of his *Pamela*, as from "a gentleman of the most distinguished taste and abilities"—"an incomparable writer," &c., in which both that work and its author are extolled in a way that must have left the most inordinate vanity nothing to desire. The laudation, however, as we see, was liberally repaid on Richardson's part: if *Pamela* was unequalled among books, *Pamela's* critic was incomparable among writers: there was a fair interchange between the parties. Perhaps, however, if it had been announced that the incomparable critic and fine writer was only Aaron Hill, the effect designed to be produced on the public mind might have been somewhat damaged.

COLLINS.—SHENSTONE.—GRAY.

By far the greatest of all the poetical writers of this age who, from the small quantity of their productions, or the brevity of each of them separately considered, are styled minor poets, is Collins. William Collins, born in 1720, died at the early age of thirty-six, and nearly all his poetry had been written ten years before his death. His volume of *Odes*, descriptive and allegorical, was published in 1746; his *Oriental Eclogues* had appeared some years before, while he was a student at Oxford. Only his unfinished *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders* was found among his papers after his death, and it is dated 1749. The six or seven last years of his short life were clouded with a

depression of spirits which made intellectual exertion impossible. All that Collins has written is full of imagination, pathos, and melody. The defect of his poetry in general is that there is too little of earth in it: in the purity and depth of its beauty it resembles the bright blue sky. Yet Collins had genius enough for anything; and in his ode entitled *The Passions* he has shown with how strong a voice and pulse of humanity he could, when he chose, animate his verse, and what extensive and enduring popularity he could command. We may here also mention his contemporaries, Gray and Shenstone, since, although both survived the accession of George III.—Shenstone dying at the age of fifty in 1763, Gray at that of fifty-five in 1771—nearly all their poetry was produced before that event. Shenstone is remembered for his *Pastoral Ballad*, his *Schoolmistress*, and an elegy or two; but there was very little potency of any kind in the music of his slender oaten pipe. Gray's famous *Elegy*, his two *Pindarics*, his *Ode on Eton College*, his *Long Story*, some translations from the Norse and Welsh, and a few other short pieces, which make up his contributions to the poetry of his native language, are all admirable for their exquisite finish, nor is a true poetical spirit ever wanting, whatever may be thought of the form in which it is sometimes embodied. When his two celebrated compositions, '*The Progress of Poesy*' and '*The Bard*,' appeared together in 1757, Johnson affirms that "the readers of poetry were at first content to gaze in mute amazement;" and, although the difficulty or impossibility of understanding them which was then, it seems, felt and confessed, is no longer complained of, much severe animadversion has been passed

on them on other accounts. But, whatever objections may be made to the artificial and unnatural character and over-elaboration of their style, the gorgeous brocade of the verse does not hide the true fire and fancy beneath, or even the real elegance of taste that has arrayed itself so ambitiously. But Gray often expresses himself, too, as naturally and simply in his poetry as he always does in his charming Letters and other writings in prose : the most touching of the verses in his Ode to Eton College, for instance, are so expressed ; and in his Long Story he has given the happiest proof of his mastery over the lightest graces and gaieties of song.

ARMSTRONG—AKENSIDE—WILKIE—GLOVER.

Among the more eminent writers of longer poems about this date may be noticed Dr. John Armstrong, who was born in Scotland in 1709, and whose *Art of Preserving Health*, published in 1744, has the rare merit of an original and characteristic style, distinguished by raciness and manly grace ; and Dr. Mark Akenside, likewise a physician, the author, at the age of twenty-three, of *The Pleasures of Imagination*, published in the same year with Armstrong's poem, and giving another example of the treatment of a didactic subject in verse with great ingenuity and success. Akenside's rich, though diffuse, eloquence, and the store of fanciful illustration which he pours out, evidence a wonderfully full mind for so young a man. Neither Akenside nor Armstrong published any more verse after the accession of George III. ; though the former lived till 1770, and the latter till 1779. Wilkie, the author of the rhyming epic called *The Epigoniad*, who was a Scotch clergyman

and professor of natural philosophy at St. Andrew's, would also appear from the traditionary accounts we have of him to have been a person of some genius as well as learning, though in composing his said epic he seems not to have gone much farther for his model or fount of inspiration than to the more sonorous passages of Pope's Homer. The *Epigoniad*, published in 1753, can scarcely be said to have in any proper sense of the word long survived its author, who died in 1772. Nor probably was Glover's blank verse epic of *Leonidas*, which appeared so early as 1737, much read when he himself passed away from among men, in the year 1785, at the age of seventy-four—although it had had a short day of extraordinary popularity, and is a performance of considerable rhetorical merit. Glover, who was a merchant of London, and distinguished as a city political leader on the liberal side (a circumstance which helped the temporary success of his epic), also wrote two tragedies, *Boadicea*, which was brought out in 1753; *Medea*, which appeared in 1761: they have the reputation of being cold and declamatory, and have been both long ago consigned to oblivion. He is best remembered for his ballad of *Admiral Hosier's Ghost*—which he wrote when he was seven and twenty, and was accustomed, it seems, to sing to the end of his life,—though Hannah More, who tells us she heard him sing it in his last days, is mistaken in saying that he was then past eighty.

YOUNG.—THOMSON.

Of the remaining poetical names of this age the two most considerable are those of Young and Thomson. Dr. Edward Young, the celebrated author of the *Night Thoughts*, was born in 1681 and lived till 1765. He

may be shortly characterised as, at least in manner, a sort of successor, under the reign of Pope and the new style established by him and Dryden, of the Donnes and the Cowleys of a former age. He had nothing, however, of Donne's subtle fancy, and as little of the gaiety and playfulness that occasionally break out among the quibbles and contortions of Cowley. On the other hand, he has much more passion and pathos than Cowley, and, with less elegance, perhaps makes a nearer approach in some of his greatest passages to the true sublime. But his style is radically an affected and false one; and of what force it seems to possess, the greater part is the result not of any real principle of life within it, but of mere strutting and straining. Nothing can be more unlike the poetry of the Night Thoughts than that of the Seasons. If Young is all art and effort, Thomson is all negligence and nature; so negligent, indeed, that he pours forth his unpremeditated song apparently without the thought ever occurring to him that he could improve it by any study or elaboration, any more than if he were some winged warbler of the woodlands, seeking and caring for no other listener except the universal air which the strain made vocal. As he is the poet of nature, so his poetry has all the intermingled rudeness and luxuriance of its theme. There is no writer who has drunk in more of the inmost soul of his subject. If it be the object of descriptive poetry to present us with pictures and visions the effect of which shall vie with that of the originals from which they are drawn, then Thomson is the greatest of all descriptive poets; for there is no other who surrounds us with so much of the truth of Nature, or makes us feel so inti-

mately the actual presence and companionship of all her hues and fragrances. His spring blossoms and gives forth its beauty like a daisied meadow ; and his summer landscapes have all the sultry warmth and green luxuriance of June ; and his harvest fields and his orchards " hang the heavy head " as if their fruitage were indeed embrowning in the sun ; and we see and hear the driving of his winter snows, as if the air around us were in confusion with their uproar. The beauty and purity of imagination, also, diffused over the melodious stanzas of the *Castle of Indolence*, make that poem one of the gems of the language. Thomson died in 1748, in his forty-eighth year. Two years before had died his countryman, the Rev. Robert Blair, born in 1699, the author of the well known poem in blank verse called *The Grave*, said to have been first published in 1743. It is remarkable for its masculine vigour of thought and expression, and for the imaginative solemnity with which it invests the most familiar truths ; and it has always been one of our most popular religious poems.

SCOTTISH POETRY.

Thomson, whose *Winter*, the first portion of his *Seasons*, was published in 1726, was the first Scotsman who won any conspicuous place for himself in English literature. He had been preceded, indeed, in the writing of English by two or three others of his countrymen ; by Drummond of Hawthornden, who has been mentioned in a preceding volume, and his contemporaries—the Earl of Stirling, who is the author of several rhyming tragedies and other poems, well versified, but not otherwise of much poetical merit, published between 1603 and 1637, the Earl of Ancrum, by whom we have

some sonnets and other short pieces, and Sir Robert Ayton, to whom is commonly attributed the well-known song, "I do confess thou 'rt smooth and fair," and who is also the author of a considerable number of other similar effusions, many of them of superior polish and elegance.* At a later date, too, Sir George Mackenzie, as already noticed, had written some English prose; as indeed Drummond had also done, besides his poetry. But none of these writers, belonging to the century that followed the union of the crowns, can be considered as having either acquired any high or diffused reputation in his own time, or retained much hold upon posterity. Even Drummond is hardly remembered as anything more than a respectable sonneteer; his most elaborate work, his prose History of the Jameses, has passed into as complete general oblivion as the tragedies and epics of Lord Stirling and the Essays of Sir George Mackenzie. If there be any other writer born in Scotland of earlier date than Thomson who has still a living and considerable name among English authors, it is Bishop Burnet; but those of his literary performances by which he continues to be chiefly remembered, however important for the facts they contain, have scarcely any literary value. Leighton, the eloquent archbishop of Glasgow, although of Scotch descent, was himself born in London. The poetry of Thomson was the first produce of the next era, in which the two countries were really made one by their union under one legislature, and

* Large additions have been made to the previously known poetry of this writer by the recent discovery of a manuscript volume of his compositions, the contents of which have since been given to the world through the press by its possessor, Mr. J. Roger, of Denino, Fifeshire.

the English became the literary language of the one part of the island as much as of the other.

The Scottish dialect, however, still continued to be employed in poetry. The great age of Scottish poetry, as we have seen, extends from about the beginning of the fifteenth to about the middle of the sixteenth century, the succession of distinguished names comprehending, among others, those of James I., and Henderson, and Holland, and Henry the Minstrel, and Gawin Douglas, and Dunbar, and Sir David Lyndsay.* It is remarkable that this space of a hundred and fifty years exactly corresponds to the period of the decay and almost extinction of poetry in England which intervenes between Chaucer and Surrey. On the other hand, with the revival of English poetry in the latter part of the sixteenth century the voice of Scottish song almost died away. The principal names of the writers of Scottish verse that occur for a hundred and fifty years after the death of Lyndsay are those of Alexander Scot, who was Lyndsay's contemporary, but probably survived him, and who is the author of several short amatory compositions, which have procured him from Pinkerton the designation of the Scottish Anacreon; Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington, who died at a great age in 1586, and is less memorable as a poet than as a collector and preserver of poetry, the two famous manuscript volumes in the Pepysian Library, in which are found the only existing copies of so many curious old pieces, having been compiled under his direction, although his own compositions, which have lately, with proper piety, been printed by the Maitland Club at Glasgow, are also of some bulk,

* See First Series, vol. ii pp. 185—199, and 242—248.

and are creditable to his good feeling and good sense; Captain Alexander Montgomery, whose allegory of *'The Cherry and the Slae'*, published in 1597, is remarkable for the facility and flow of the language, and long continued a popular favourite, its peculiar metre (which, however, is of earlier origin than this poem) having been on several occasions adopted by Burns; and Alexander Hume, who was a clergyman and died in 1609, having published a volume of *Hymns, or Sacred Songs*, in his native dialect, in 1599. Other Scottish poets of the sixteenth century, of whom nothing or next to nothing is known except the names, and a few short pieces attributed to some of them, are John Maitland lord Thirlstane (second son of Sir Richard), Alexander Arbuthnot, who was a clergyman, Clapperton, Flemyng, John Blyth, Moffat, Fethy, Balnavis, Sempil, Norval, Allan Watson, George Bannatyne (the writer of the Bannatyne manuscript in the Advocates' Library), who was a canon of the cathedral of Moray, and Wedderburn, the supposed author of the *Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs*, of which the first edition in all probability appeared in the latter part of this century, and also, according to one theory, of *The Complaint of Scotland*, published in 1548.* But it is possible that some of these names may belong to a date anterior to that of Lyndsay. King James also, before his accession to the English throne, published in Edinburgh two collections of Scottish verse by himself; the first, in 1585, entitled *The Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesy*; the other, in 1591, *His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at vacant hours*; but the royal inspiration is peculiarly weak and flat. In

* See *Sketches, First Series*, vol. ii. p. 243.

the whole course, we believe, of the seventeenth century not even the name of a Scottish poet or versifier occurs. The next that appeared was Allan Ramsay, who was the contemporary of Thomson, and must be accounted the proper successor of Sir David Lyndsay, after the lapse of more than a century and a half. Ramsay was born in 1686, and lived till 1758. He belongs to the order of self-taught poets, his original profession having been that of a barber; his first published performance, his clever continuation of the old poem of Christ's Kirk on the Green (attributed by some to James I. of Scotland, by others to James V.) appeared in 1712; his *Gentle Shepherd*, in 1725; and he produced besides numerous songs and other shorter pieces, from time to time. Ramsay's verse is in general neither very refined nor very imaginative, but it has always more or less in it of true poetic life. His lyrics, with all their frequent coarseness, are many of them full of rustic hilarity and humour; and his well-known pastoral, though its dramatic pretensions otherwise are slender enough, for nature and truth both in the characters and manners may rank with the happiest compositions of its class. To this same age of the revival of Scottish poetry also belongs nearly the whole of that remarkable body of national song known as the Jacobite minstrelsy, forming altogether as animated and powerful an expression of the popular feeling, in all its varieties of pathos, humour, indignation, and scorn, as has anywhere else been embodied in verse. It is almost all anonymous too, as if it had actually sprung from the general heart of people, or formed itself spontaneously in the air of land. Probably, some of the many other Scottish

songs and ballads no authors of which are known may have been produced among the peasantry themselves, even during the long interval of the first hundred years after the union of the crowns, to which there belongs no name of a Scottish poet, nor any poetry written or printed in that dialect. It is reasonable to suppose that Allan Ramsay must have had a line of predecessors of his own class, and that in this way the stream of native song flowed as it were underground, or hidden among the herbage, from its disappearance with Lyndsay till it re-emerged in him. But it was the exile of the old royal family, followed by the two successive romantic attempts of their adherents to restore them to the throne, that first blew again into a blaze the fire of poetry that lived in the national heart, and enabled it to break through the rigorous incrustment under which it had been oppressed and all but extinguished ever since the Reformation. This was the first decided revolt of the spirit of poetry against that of presbytery.

THE NOVELISTS, RICHARDSON, FIELDING, SMOLLETT.

A very remarkable portion of the literature of the middle of the last century is the body of prose fiction, the authors of which we familiarly distinguish as the modern English novelists, and which in some respects may be said still to stand apart from everything in the language produced either before or since. If there be any writer entitled to step in before Richardson and Fielding in claiming the honour of having originated the English novel, it is Daniel Defoe. But, admirable as Defoe is for his inventive power and his art of narrative, he can hardly be said to have left us any diversified

picture of the social life of his time, and he is rather a great *raconteur* than a novelist, strictly and properly so called. He identifies himself, indeed, as perfectly as any writer ever did with the imaginary personages whose adventures he details ;—but still it is adventures he deals with rather than either manners or characters. It may be observed that there is seldom or ever anything peculiar or characteristic in the language of his heroes and heroines ; some of them talk, or write, through whole volumes, but all in the same style ; in fact, as to this matter, every one of them is merely a repetition of Defoe himself. Nor even in professed dialogue is he happy in individualizing his characters by their manner of expressing themselves ; there may be the employment occasionally of certain distinguishing phrases, but the adaptation of the speech to the speaker seldom goes much beyond such mere mechanical artifices ; the heart and spirit do not flash out as they do in nature ; we may remember Robinson Crusoe's man Friday by his broken English, but it is in connexion with the fortunes of their lives only, of the full stream of incident and adventure upon which they are carried along, of the perils and perplexities in which they are involved, and the shifts they are put to, that we think of Colonel Jacque, or Moll Flanders, or even of Robinson Crusoe himself. What character they have to us is all gathered from the circumstances in which they are placed ; very little or none of it from either the manner or the matter of their discourses. Even their conduct is for the most part the result of circumstances ; any one of them acts, as well as speaks, very nearly as any other would have done similarly situated. Great and original as he is in his proper

line, and admirable as the fictions with which he has enriched our literature are for their other merits, Defoe has created no character which lives in the national mind — no Squire Western, or Trulliber, or Parson Adams, or Strap, or Pipes, or Trunnion, or Lesmahago, or Corporal Trim, or Uncle Toby. He has made no attempt at any such delineation. It might be supposed that a writer able to place himself and his readers so completely in the midst of the imaginary scenes he describes would have excelled in treating a subject dramatically. But, in truth, his genius was not at all dramatic. With all his wonderful power of interesting us by the air of reality he throws over his fictions, and carrying us along with him whithersoever he pleases, he has no faculty of passing out of himself in the dramatic spirit, of projecting himself out of his own proper nature and being into those of the creations of his brain. However strong his conception was of other things, he had no strong conception of character. Besides, with all his imagination and invention, he had little wit, and no humour — no remarkable skill in any other kind of representation except merely that of the plain literal truth of things. Vivid and even creative as his imagination was, it was still not poetical. It looked through no atmosphere of ideal light at anything; it saw nothing adorned, beautified, elevated above nature; its gift was to see the reality, and no more. Its pictures, therefore, partake rather of the character of fac-similes than of that of works of art in the true sense. On turning our eyes from his productions to those either of Fielding or Richardson, we feel at once the spell of quite another sort of inventive or creative power. Yet no two writers could

well be more unlike than the two we have mentioned are to one another both in manner and in spirit. Intellectually and morally, by original constitution of mind as well as in the circumstances of their training and situation, the two great contemporary novelists stood opposed the one to the other in the most complete contrast. Fielding, a gentleman by birth, and liberally educated, had been a writer for the public from the time he was twenty: Richardson, who had nearly attained that age before Fielding came into the world (the one was born in 1689, the other in 1707), having begun life as a mechanic, had spent the greater part of it as a tradesman, and had passed his fiftieth year before he became an author. Yet, after they had entered upon the same new field of literature almost together, they found themselves rivals upon that ground for as long as either continued to write. To Richardson certainly belongs priority of date as a novelist: the first part of his *Pamela* was published in 1740, the conclusion in 1741; and Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, originally conceived with the design of turning Richardson's work into ridicule, appeared in 1742. Thus, as if their common choice of the same species of writing, and their antipathies of nature and habit, had not been enough to divide them, it was destined that the two founders of the new school of fiction should begin their career by having a personal quarrel. For their works, notwithstanding all the remarkable points of dissimilarity between those of the one and those of the other, must still be considered as belonging to the same school or form of literary composition, and that a form which they had been the first to exemplify in our language. Unlike as *Joseph Andrews* was to *Pamela*,

yet the two resembled each other more than either did any other English work of fiction. They were still our two first novels properly so called—our two first artistically constructed epics of real life. And the identity of the species of fictitious narrative cultivated by the two writers became more apparent as its character was more completely developed by their subsequent publications, and each proceeded in proving its capabilities in his own way, without reference to what had been done by the other. Fielding's Jonathan Wild appeared in 1743; Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe—the greatest of his works—was given to the world in 1748; and the next year the greatest birth of Fielding's genius—his Tom Jones—saw the light. Finally, Fielding's Amelia was published in 1751; and Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison in 1753. Fielding died at Lisbon in 1754, at the age of forty-seven; Richardson survived till 1761, but wrote nothing more.

Meanwhile, however, a third writer had presented himself upon the same field—Smollett, whose Roderick Random had appeared in 1748, his Peregrine Pickle in 1751, and his Count Fathom in 1754, when the energetic Scotsman was yet only in his thirty-fourth year. His Sir Launcelot Greaves followed in 1762, and his Humphrey Clinker in 1771, in the last year of the author's active life. Our third English novelist is as much a writer *sui generis* as either of his two predecessors, as completely distinguished from each of them in the general character of his genius as they are from each other. Of the three, Richardson had evidently by far the richest natural soil of mind; his defects sprung from deficiency of cultivation; his power was his own in the strictest

sense; not borrowed from books, little aided even by experience of life, derived almost solely from introspection of himself and communion with his own heart. He alone of the three could have written what he did without having himself witnessed and lived through the scenes and characters described, or something like them which only required to be embellished and heightened, and otherwise artistically treated, in order to form an interesting and striking fictitious representation. His fertility of invention, in the most comprehensive meaning of that term, is wonderful,—supplying him on all occasions with a copious stream both of incident and of thought that floods the page, and seems as if it might so flow on and diffuse itself for ever. Yet it must be confessed that he has delineated for us rather human nature than human life—rather the heart and its universal passions, as modified merely by a few broad distinctions of temperament, of education, of external circumstances, than those subtler idiosyncracies which constitute what we properly call character. Many characters, no doubt, there are set before us in his novels, very admirably drawn and discriminated; Pamela, her parents, Mr. B., Mrs. Jewkes, Clarissa, Lovelace, Miss Howe, Sir Charles Grandison, Miss Byron, Clementina, are all delineations of this description for the most part natural, well brought out, and supported by many happy touches: but (with the exception, perhaps, of the last mentioned) they can scarcely be called original conceptions of a high order, creations at once true to nature and new to literature; nor have they added to that population of the world of fiction among which every reader of books has many familiar acquaintances hardly less real

to his fancy and feelings than any he has met with in the actual world, and for the most part much more interesting. That which, besides the story, interests us in Richardson's novels, is not the characters of his personages but their sentiments—not their modes but their motives of action—the anatomy of their hearts and inmost natures, which is unfolded to us with so elaborate an inquisition and such matchless skill. Fielding, on the other hand, has very little of this, and Smollett still less. They set before us their pictures of actual life in much the same way as life itself would have set them before us if our experience had chanced to bring us into contact with the particular situations and personages delineated; we see, commonly, merely what we should have seen as lookers on, not in the particular confidence of any of the figures in the scene; there are they all, acting or talking according to their various circumstances, habits, and humours, and we may look at them and listen to them as attentively as we please; but, if we want to know anything more of them than what is visible to all the world, we must find it out for ourselves in the best way we can, for neither they nor the author will ordinarily tell us a word of it. What both these writers have given us in their novels is for the most part their own actual experience of life, irradiated, of course, by the lights of fancy and genius, and so made much more brilliant and attractive than it was in the reality, but still in its substance the produce not of meditation but of observation chiefly. Even Fielding, with all his wit, or at least pregnancy of thought and style—for the quality in his writings to which we allude appears to be the result rather of elaboration than of instinctive perception—

would probably have left us nothing much worth preserving in the proper form of a novel, if he had not had his diversified practical knowledge of society to draw upon, and especially his extensive and intimate acquaintance with the lower orders of all classes, in painting whom he is always greatest and most at home. Within that field, indeed, he is the greatest of all our novelists. Yet he has much more refinement of literary taste than either Smollett or Richardson ; and, indeed, of the works of all the three, his alone can be called classical works in reference to their formal character. Both his style and the construction of his stories display a care and artifice altogether unknown to the others, both of whom, writing on without plan or forethought, appear on all occasions to have made use alike of the first words and the first incidents that presented themselves. Smollett, a practised writer for the press, had the command, indeed, of a style the fluency of which is far from being without force, or rhetorical parade either ; but it is animated by no peculiar expressiveness, by no graces either of art or of nature. His power consists in the cordiality of his conception and the breadth and freedom of his delineation of the humorous, both in character and in situation. The feeling of the humorous in Smollett always overpowers, or at least has a tendency to overpower, the merely satirical spirit ; which is not the case with Fielding, whose humour has generally a sly vein of satire running through it, even when it is most gay and genial.

STERNE.

- But he to whom belongs the finest spirit of whim

among all our writers of this class is the immortal author of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. Sterne, born in Ireland in 1713, had already published one or two unregarded sermons when the first and second volumes of his most singular novel were brought out at York in the year 1759. The third and fourth volumes followed in 1761; the fifth and sixth in 1762; the seventh and eighth not till 1765; the ninth in 1767. The six volumes of his *Yorick's Sermons* had also come out in pairs in the intervals; his *Sentimental Journey* appeared in 1768; and his death took place the same year. Sterne has been charged with imitation and plagiarism; but surely originality is the last quality that can be denied to him. To dispute his possession of that is much the same as it would be to deny that the sun is luminous because some spots have been detected upon its surface. If Sterne has borrowed or stolen some few things from other writers, at least no one ever had a better right to do so in virtue of the amount that there is in his writings of what is really his own. If he has been much indebted to any predecessor, it is to Rabelais; but, except in one or two detached episodes, he has wholly eschewed the extravagance and grotesqueness in which the genius of Rabelais loves to disport itself, and the tenderness and humanity that pervade his humour are quite unlike anything in the mirth of Rabelais. There is not much humour, indeed, anywhere out of Shakspeare and Cervantes which resembles or can be compared with that of Sterne. It would be difficult to name any writer but one of these two who could have drawn *Uncle Toby* or *Trim*. Another common mistake about Sterne is, that the mass of what he has written

consists of little better than nonsense or rubbish—that his beauties are but grains of gold glittering here and there in a heap of sand, or, at most, rare spots of green scattered over an arid waste. Of no writer could this be said with less correctness. Whatever he has done is wrought with the utmost care, and to the highest polish and perfection. With all his apparent caprices of manner, his language is throughout the purest idiomatic English; nor is there, usually, a touch in any of his pictures that could be spared without injury to the effect. And, in his great work, how completely brought out, how exquisitely finished, is every figure, from Uncle Toby, and Brother Shandy, and Trim, and Yorick, down to Dr. Slop, and Widow Wadman, and Mrs. Bridget, and Obadiah himself! Who would resign any one of them, or any part of any one of them?

GOLDSMITH.

It has been observed, with truth, that, although Richardson has on the whole the best claim to the title of inventor of the modern English novel, he never altogether succeeded in throwing off the inflation of the French romance, and representing human beings in the true light and shade of human nature. Undoubtedly the men and women of Fielding and Smollett are of more genuine flesh and blood than the elaborate heroes and heroines who figure in his pages. But both Fielding and Smollett, notwithstanding the fidelity as well as spirit of their style of drawing from real life, have for the most part confined themselves to some two or three departments of the wide field of social existence, rather abounding in strongly marked peculiarities of character than

urnishing a fair representation of the common national mind and manners. And Sterne also, in his more aerial way, deals rather with the oddities and quaintnesses of opinion and habit that are to be met with among his countrymen than with the broad general course of our English way of thinking and living. Our first genuine novel of domestic life is Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, written in 1761, when its author, born in Ireland in 1728, was as yet an obscure doer of all work for the booksellers, but not published till 1766, when his name had already obtained celebrity by his poem of *The Traveller*. Assuming the grace of confession, or the advantage of the first word, Goldsmith himself introduces his performance by observing, that there are a hundred faults in it; adding, that a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. The case is not exactly as he puts it: the faults may have compensating beauties, but are incontrovertibly faults. Indeed, if we look only to what is more superficial or external in the work, to the construction and conduct of the story, and even to much of the exhibition of manners and character, its faults are unexampled and astounding. Never was there a story put together in such an inartificial, thoughtless, blundering way. It is little better than such a "concatenation accordingly" as satisfies one in a dream. It is not merely that every thing is brought about by such sudden apparitions and transformations as only happen at the call of Harlequin's wand. Of this the author himself seems to be sensible, from a sort of defence which he sets up in one place: "Nor can I go on," he observes, after one of his sharp turns, "without a reflection on those accidental meetings which, though they happen every day, seldom

excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous occurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives! How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed! The peasant must be disposed to labour, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply." But, in addition to this, probability, or we might almost say possibility, is violated at every step with little more hesitation or compunction than in a fairy tale. Nothing happens, nobody acts, as things would happen, and as men and women would naturally act, in real life. Much of what goes on is entirely incredible and incomprehensible. Even the name of the book seems an absurdity. The Vicar leaves Wakefield in the beginning of the third chapter, and, it must be supposed, resigns his vicarage, of which we hear no more; yet the family is called the family of Wakefield throughout. This is of a piece with the famous bull that occurs in the ballad given in a subsequent chapter:

The dew, the blossoms on the tree,
With charms *inconstant* shine;
Their charms were his, but, woe to me,
Their *constancy* was mine.

But why does the vicar, upon losing his fortune, give up his vicarage? Why, in his otherwise reduced circumstances, does he prefer a curacy of fifteen pounds to a vicarage of thirty-five? Are we expected to think this quite a matter of course (there is not a syllable of explanation), upon the same principle on which we are called upon to believe that he was overwhelmed with surprise at finding his old friend Wilmot not to be a

monogamist—the said friend being at that time actually courting a fourth wife. And it is all in the same strain. The whole story of the two Thornhills, the uncle and nephew, is a heap of contradictions and absurdities. Sir William Thornhill is universally known, and yet in his assumed character of Burchell, without even, as far as appears, any disguise of his person, he passes undetected in a familiar intercourse of months with the tenantry of his own estate. If, indeed, we are not to understand something even beyond this—that, while all the neighbours know him to be Sir William, the Primroses alone never learn that fact, and still continue to take him for Mr. Burchell. But what, after all, is Burchell's real history? Nothing that is afterwards stated confirms or explains the intimation he is made unintentionally to let fall in one of the commencing chapters, about his early life. How, by the by, does the vicar come to know, a few chapters afterwards, that Burchell has really been telling his own story in the account he had given of Sir William Thornhill? Compare chapters third and sixth. But, take any view we will, the uncle's treatment of his nephew remains unaccounted for. Still more unintelligible is his conduct in his self-adopted capacity of lover of one of the vicar's daughters, and guardian of the virtue and safety of both. The plainest, easiest way of saving them from all harm and all danger stares him in the face, and for no reason that can be imagined he leaves them to their fate. As for his accidental rescue of Sophia afterwards, the whole affair is only to be matched for wildness and extravagance in Jack the Giant-killer or some other of that class of books. It is beyond even

the Doctor of Divinity appearing at the fair with his horse to sell, and in the usual forms putting him through all his paces. But it is impossible to enumerate all the improbabilities with which the story is filled. Every scene, without any exception, in which the squire appears involves something out of nature or part understanding—his position in reference to his uncle in the first place, the whole of his intercourse with the clergyman's family, his dining with them attended by his two women and his troop of servants in their one room, at other times his association there with young farmer Williams (suddenly provided by the author when wanted as a suitor for Olivia), the unblushing manner in which he makes his infamous proposals, the still more extraordinary indulgence with which they are forgiven and forgotten, or rather forgotten without his ever having asked or dreamt of asking forgiveness, all his audacious ruffianism in his attempts to possess himself of the two sisters at once, and finally, and above all, his defence of himself to his uncle at their meeting in the prison, which surely outrants any thing ever before attempted in decent prose or rhyme. Nor must that superlative pair of lovers, the vicar's eldest son George and Miss Arabella Wilmot, be forgotten, with the singularly cool and easy way in which they pass from the most violent affection to the most entire indifference, and on the lady's part even transference of hand and heart to another, and back again as suddenly to mutual transport and confidence. If Goldsmith intended George for a representation of himself (as their adventures are believed to have been in some respects the same), we should be sorry to think the likeness a good one; for he is the most disagreeable

character in the book. His very existence seems to have been entirely forgotten by his family, and by the author, for the first three years after he left home; and the story would have been all the better if he had never chanced to turn up again, or to be thought of, at all. Was ever such a letter read as the one he is made in duty and affection to write to his father in the twenty-eighth chapter! Yet there is that in the book which makes all this comparatively of little consequence; the inspiration and vital power of original genius, the charm of true feeling, some portion of the music of the great hymn of nature made audible to all hearts. Notwithstanding all its improbabilities, the story not only amuses us while we read, but takes root in the memory and affections as much almost as any story that was ever written. In truth, the critical objections to which it is obnoxious hardly affect its real merits and the proper sources of its interest. All of it that is essential lies in the development of the characters of the good vicar and his family, and they are one and all admirably brought out. He himself, simple and credulous, but also learned and clear-headed, so guileless and affectionate, sustaining so well all fortunes, so great both in suffering and in action, altogether so unselfish and noble-minded; his wife, of a much coarser grain, with her gooseberry-wine, and her little female vanities and schemes of ambition, but also made respectable by her love and reverence for her husband, her pride in, if not affection for, her children, her talent of management and housewifery, and the fortitude and resignation with which she too bears her part in their common calamities; the two girls, so unlike and yet so sister-like; the inimitable Moses, with his black ribbon,

and his invincibility in argument and bargain-making; nor to be omitted the chubby-cheeked *regue* little Bill, and the "honest veteran" Dick; the homely happiness of that fireside, upon which worldly misfortune can cast hardly a passing shadow; their little concerts, their dances; neighbour Flamborough's two rosy daughters, with their red topknots; Moses's speculation in the green spectacles, and the vicar's own subsequent adventure (though running somewhat into the *extravaganza* style) with the same venerable arch-rogue, "with grey hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes;" the immortal family picture; and, like a sudden thunderbolt falling in the sunshine, the flight of poor passion-driven Olivia, her few distracted words as she stepped into the chaise, "O! what will my poor papa do when he knows I am undone!" and the heart-shivered old man's cry of anguish—"Now, then, my children, go and be miserable; for we shall never enjoy one hour more;"—these, and other incidents and touches of the same kind, are the parts of the book that are remembered; all the rest drops off, as so much mere husk, or extraneous enwrapment, after we have read it; and out of these we reconstruct the story, if we will have one, for ourselves, or, what is better, rest satisfied with the good we have got, and do not mind though so much truth and beauty will not take the shape of a story, which is after all the source of pleasure even in a work of fiction which is of the lowest importance, for it scarcely lasts after the first reading. Part of the charm of this novel of Goldsmith's too consists in the art of writing which he has displayed in it. The style, always easy, transparent, harmonious, and expressive, teems with felicities in the more heightened passages.

And, finally, the humour of the book is all good-humour. There is scarcely a touch of ill-nature or even of satire in it from beginning to end—nothing of either acrimony or acid. Johnson has well characterised Goldsmith in his epitaph as *sive risus essent movendi sive lacrymæ, affectuum potens at lenis dominator*—a ruler of our affections, and mover alike of our laughter and our tears, as gentle as he is prevailing. With many loveable qualities, he is charged with having had also some weaknesses and pettinesses of personal character ; but his writings are as free from any ingredient of malignity, either great or small, as those of any man. As the author of the *Traveller* and the *Deserted Village*, published in 1765 and 1771, Goldsmith, who lived till 1774, also holds a distinguished place among the poetical writers of the middle portion of the last century. He had not the skyey fancy of his predecessor Collins, but there is an earnestness and cordiality in his poetry which the school of Pope, to which, in its form at least, it belongs, had scarcely before reached, and which make it an appropriate prelude to the more fervid song that was to burst forth among us in another generation.

CHURCHILL.

But perhaps the writer who, if not by what he did himself, yet by the effects of his example, gave the greatest impulse to our poetry at this time, was Churchill. Charles Churchill, born in 1731, published his first poem, *The Rosciad*, in 1761 ; and the rest of his pieces, his *Apology to the Critical Reviewers*—his epistle to his friend Lloid, entitled *Night—The Ghost*, eventually extended to four Books—*The Prophecy of Famine*—his

Epistle to Hogarth—The Conference—The Duellist—The Author—Gotham, in three Books—The Candidate—The Farewell—The Times—Independence—all within the next three years and a half. He was suddenly carried off by an attack of fever, in November, 1764. If we put aside Thomson, Churchill, after all deductions, may be pronounced, looking to the quantity as well as the quality of his productions, to be the most considerable figure that appears in our poetry, in the half-century from Pope to Cowper. But that is, perhaps, rather to say little for the said half-century than much for Churchill. All that he wrote being not only upon topics of the day, but addressed to the most sensitive or most excited passions of the mob of readers, he made an immense impression upon his contemporaries, which, however, is now worn very faint. Some looked upon him as Dryden come to life again, others as a greater than Dryden. As for Pope, he was generally thought to be quite outshone or eclipsed by the new satirist. Yet Churchill, in truth, with great rhetorical vigour and extraordinary fluency, is wholly destitute of either poetry or wit of any high order. He is only, at the most, a better sort of Cleveland, not certainly having more force or pungency than that old writer, but a freer flow and broader sweep in his satire. Of the true fervour and fusing power of Dryden he has nothing, any more than he has of what is best and most characteristic in Pope, to whose wit his stands in the relation or contrast of a wooden pin to a lancet. The most successful ten continuous lines he ever wrote in the same style are certainly not worth the ten worst of Pope's. But, indeed, he scarcely has anywhere ten lines, or two lines,

without a blemish. In reading Pope, the constant feeling is that, of its kind, nothing could be better ; in reading Churchill, we feel that nearly every thing might be better, that if the thought is good, the setting is defective, but generally that, whatever there may be of merit in either, there are flaws in both. Instead of there being nothing to be mended, every thing might be mended. The ore indeed, is hardly even purified or properly extracted from the clay and gravel ; in no other poetry is there such an intermixture of the prosaic. But much even of the poetry is nothing more than an echo—an unscrupulous appropriation and parroting—of the phrases of preceding writers, often of such as had become universally current and familiar. What best suited Churchill was, for the most part, whatever came readiest to hand. Yet there was a fine animal spirit about him ; and, as we have said, his example probably contributed a good deal to give more freedom and cordiality to our poetry. But it was much as the adventurousness of a drunken man may sometimes inspire those who are sober. Cowper, who was at school with Churchill, and had a high admiration of his writings (some of which, however, that he praises most he can hardly be supposed to have looked into from the time of their first appearance), seems to have made him his model in some respects.*

* For a much higher estimate of Churchill's poetry than we have been able to take, the reader may be referred to an able article in the *Edinburgh Review*, No. clxiii., which is especially interesting for its eloquent and generous survey of the life of Churchill. See also *Southey's Life of Cowper*, vol. i. pp. 45—105.

FALCONER.—BEATTIE.—ANSTEY.—J. H. STEVENSON.—
MASON.

To the present date belongs Falconer's pleasing descriptive poem, *The Shipwreck*, the truth, nature, and pathos of which, without much imaginative adornment, have made it a general favourite. It was first published in 1762, and its author, who was a native of Scotland, was lost at sea in 1769, in his thirty-ninth year. Another poem of this age, by a countryman of Falconer's, is Beattie's *Minstrel*, the first book of which was published in 1770, the second in 1774. The *Minstrel* is an harmonious and eloquent composition, glowing with poetical sentiment; but its inferiority in the highest poetical qualities may be felt by comparing it with Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, which is perhaps the other work in the language which it most nearly resembles, but which yet it resembles much in the same way as gilding does solid gold, or as coloured water might be made to resemble wine. Everybody knows that, besides this and other pieces in verse, Beattie, who survived till 1803, wrote an *Essay on Truth*, and some other prose works, which everybody has long given up reading. The *New Bath Guide*, by Anstey, who lived till 1805, and wrote a considerable quantity of more verse, may be noticed as another of the poetical productions of this time, which for a season enjoyed great popularity, though now neglected. It first appeared in 1766, and the edition before us, printed in 1772, is the eighth. The *New Bath Guide* does not rise or aspire to rise above a rattling vivacity, and has been far surpassed in brilliancy by later productions in the same style; but it is entitled to be remembered as the earliest successful attempt of its class.

Among the lighter versifiers of this period may be mentioned John Hall Stevenson, the author of the *Crazy Tales*, and other collections of satiric pieces, which are impregnated by a much airier spirit of wit and humour than those of Anstey. We may here also notice the celebrated *Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers*, which, with several other effusions in the same vein, appeared in 1773, and is now known to have been, what it was always suspected to be, the composition of Gray's friend, Mason, who commenced poet so early as 1748 by the publication of a satire on the University of Oxford, entitled *Isis*, and afterwards produced his tragedies of *Elfrida* in 1752 and *Caractacus* in 1759, and the four *Books of his English Garden* in 1772, 1777, 1779, and 1781, besides a number of odes and other shorter pieces, some of them not till towards the close of the century. Mason, who died, at the age of seventy-two, in 1797, enjoyed in his day a great reputation, which is now become very small. His satiric verse is in the manner of Pope, but without the wit; and the staple of the rest of his poetry too is mostly words.

THE WARTONS.—PERCY.—CHATTERTON.—MACPHERSON.

There is much more fancy and true poetry, though less sound and less pretension, in the compositions of Thomas Warton, who first made himself known by a spirited reply to Mason's *Isis* in 1749, when he was only a young man of twenty-one, and afterwards produced many short pieces, all evidencing a genuine poetic eye and taste. Thomas Warton, however, who lived till 1790, chiefly owes the place he holds in our literature to his prose works—his *Observations on the Fairy*

Queen, his edition of the *Minor Poems of Milton*, and, above all, his admirable *History of English Poetry*, which, unfinished as it is, is still perhaps our greatest work in the department of literary history. Of the three quarto volumes the first appeared in 1774, the second in 1778, the last in 1781. Dr. Joseph Warton, the elder brother of Thomas, is also the writer of some agreeable verses; but the book by which his name will live is his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, the first volume of which was published, anonymously, in 1756, the second not till 1782. He died in 1800, in his seventy-eighth year. The Wartons may be regarded as the founders of a new school of poetic criticism in this country, which, romantic rather than classical in its spirit (to employ a modern nomenclature), and professing to go to nature for its principles instead of taking them on trust from the practice of the Greek and Roman poets, or the canons of their commentators, assisted materially in guiding as well as strengthening the now reviving love for our elder national poetry. But perhaps the publication which was as yet at once the most remarkable produce of this new taste, and the most effective agent in its diffusion, was Percy's celebrated *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, which first appeared in 1765. The reception of this book was the same that what is natural and true always meets with when brought into fair competition with the artificial; that is to say, when the latter is no longer new any more than the former:—

“As one who, long in populous city pent,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms

Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight;
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound ;”

such pleasure took the reader of those rude old ballads in their simplicity, directness, and breezy freshness and force, thus suddenly coming upon him after being sated with mere polish and ornament. And connected with the same matter is the famous imposture of Rowley's poems, by which a boy of seventeen, the marvellous Chatterton, deceived in the first instance a large portion of the public, and, after the detection of the fraud, secured to himself a respectable place among the original poets of his country. Chatterton, who terminated his existence by his own hand in August, 1770, produced the several imitations of ancient English poetry which he attributed to Thomas Rowley, a monk of the fifteenth century, in that and the preceding year. But this was the age of remarkable forgeries of this description; Chatterton's poems of Rowley having been preceded, and perhaps in part suggested, by Macpherson's poems of Ossian. The first specimens of the latter were published in 1760, under the title of 'Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language;' and they immediately excited both an interest and a controversy, neither the one nor the other of which has quite died away even to the present hour. One circumstance, which has contributed to keep up the dispute about Ossian so much longer than that about Rowley, no doubt, is, that there was some small portion of truth mixed up with Macpherson's deception, whereas there was none at all in Chatterton's; but the Ossianic poet-

after all that has been said about its falsehood of style and substance as well as of pretension, making it out to be thus a double lie, must still have some qualities wonderfully adapted to allure the popular taste. Both Chatterton and Macpherson wrote a quantity of modern English verse in their own names ; but nothing either did in this way was worth much : they evidently felt most at ease in their masques.

DRAMATIC WRITERS.

The dramatic literature of this era is very voluminous, but consists principally of comedies and farces of modern life, all in prose. Home, indeed, the author of *Douglas*, which came out in 1757, followed that first successful effort by about half a dozen other attempts in the same style, the last of which, entitled *Alfred*, was produced in 1778 ; but they were all failures. Horace Walpole's great tragedy, the *Mysterious Mother*, although privately printed in 1768, was never acted, and was not even published till many years after. The principal writers whose productions occupied the stage were Goldsmith, Garrick, and Foote, who all died in the earlier part of the reign of George III. ; and Macklin, Murphy, Cumberland, Colman, Mrs. Cowley, and Sheridan, who mostly survived till after the commencement of the present century. Goldsmith's two capital comedies of *The Good-Natured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*, were brought out, the former in 1768, the latter in 1773. To Garrick, a miracle of an actor, but no more than a smartish man of talent off the boards, we owe, besides many alterations and adaptations of the works of Shakespeare and other preceding dramatic writers, the lively

farces of *The Lying Valet* and *Miss in her Teens*, both, however, produced before 1760; and he is also commonly stated to have been in part the author of the excellent comedy of *The Clandestine Marriage*, brought out in 1766, which was principally written by Colman.* The still favourite farce of *High Life Below Stairs*, first acted in 1759, which used also to be attributed to Garrick, is now understood to have been written by the Rev. James Townley, assisted by Dr. Hoadly, the author of *The Suspicious Husband*. Foote produced twenty-two comic pieces, mostly farcical and satirical, between 1752 and 1778; of which *The Minor* (1760), *The Liar* (1761), and *The Mayor of Garratt* (1763), still keep the stage. He was by nature a mimic, and a somewhat coarse one, rather than a wit. Macklin, also an actor as well as Garrick and Foote, is the author of the very clever and effective comedy of *The Man of the World*, which was brought out in Ireland, his native country, in 1764, under the name of *The Free-Born Scotchman*, although the daring delineation of the principal character, the renowned Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, debarred it for many years from the English stage. Macklin, who did not die till 1797, is remarkable for having lived till the age of a hundred and seven, and for, what is still more unexampled, having continued

* In a copy of Baker's *Biographia Dramatica*, edit. of 1782, we find the following MS. note appended to the notice of this play, at p. 57 of vol. ii.:—"Garrick composed two acts, which he sent Mr. Colman, desiring him to put them together, or do what he would with them. *I did put them together*, said Mr. Colman; *for I put them in the fire, and wrote the play myself*. I had this anecdote from Mr. Colman's mouth. J. W."

his appearances on the stage almost till he was a hundred. Colman, an accomplished scholar, and well known for his translations of the Plays of Terence and Horace's Art of Poetry, and for various other literary performances, commenced dramatist in 1760, by the production of a clever and successful little piece, which he entitled "Polly Honeycombe, a Dramatic Novel;" and between twenty and thirty more comedies, farces, and alterations of older plays proceeded from his pen before 1780, among which his comedy of *The Jealous Wife*, produced in 1761, ranks as the best along with that of *The Clandestine Marriage*, already mentioned. Colman lived till 1794. Murphy, also an elegant scholar, and the translator of Tacitus and Sallust, is the author, among other dramatic productions of less note, of the farce of *The Upholsterer* (1758), of the comedies of *The Way to Keep Him* (1760), *All in the Wrong* (1761), *Know your Own Mind* (1777), and of the tragedy of *The Grecian Daughter* (1772). Murphy died in 1805, in his eighty-fifth year. Cumberland, a voluminous poet, or versifier, novelist, pamphleteer, essayist, critic, &c. &c., as well as a dramatist, began to write for the stage so early as 1761, and, amid much of what he did that is forgotten, will continue to be remembered for his striking comedies of *The West Indian*, *The Fashionable Lover*, *The Jew*, and *The Wheel of Fortune*. This somewhat overweening and superficial but still ingenious and not unamiable man died in 1811, at the age of seventy-nine. Mrs. Cowley's pleasant comedy of *The Belle's Stratagem* was brought out with great success in 1780: this lady, whose first play, *The Runaway*, appeared in 1776, wrote also a number of long poems, now all forgotten,

and survived till 1809. But the most brilliant contributions made to our dramatic literature in this age were Sheridan's celebrated comedies of *The Rivals*, brought out in 1775, when the author was only in his twenty-fifth year, *The Duenna*, which followed the same year, and *The School for Scandal*, which crowned the reputation of the modern Congreve, in 1777. After all that had been written, indeed, meritoriously enough in many instances, by his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, these plays of Sheridan's were the only additions that had yet been made to the classic comedy of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar; and perhaps we may say that they are still the last it has received. Sheridan's wit is as polished as Congreve's, and its flashes, if not quite so quick and dazzling, have a softer, a more liquid light; he may be said to stand between the highly artificial point and concentration of Congreve and the Irish ease and gaiety of Farquhar, wanting, doubtless, what is most characteristic of either, but also combining something of each. Sheridan had likewise produced all his other dramatic pieces—*The Trip to Scarborough*, *The Critic*, &c.—before 1780; although he lived for thirty-six years after that date.

FEMALE WRITERS.

The direction of so large a portion of the writing talent of this age to the comic drama is an evidence of the extended diffusion of literary tastes and accomplishments among the class most conversant with those manners and forms of social life which chiefly supply the materials of modern comedy. To this period has been sometimes assigned the commencement of the pursuit

literature as a distinct profession in England ; now, too, we may say, began its domestic cultivation among us—the practice of writing for the public as the occupation and embellishment of a part of that leisure which necessarily abounds in an advanced state of society, not only among persons possessing the means of living without exertion of any kind, but almost throughout the various grades of those who are merely raised above the necessity of labouring with their hands. Another indication of the same thing is the great increase that now took place in the number of female authors. Among the writers of plays, novels, and poetry, besides Mrs. Cowley, mentioned above, may be noticed Mrs. Sheridan (originally Miss Frances Chamberlayne),—the admirable mother of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, for whose sake Samuel Johnson was contented to keep on terms, so long as she lived, with the vain, gasconading, mercurial projector and adventurer, her husband,—the authoress of the two comedies of *The Discovery*, brought out with great success in 1763, and *The Dupe*, which was produced in 1765, and which, although it failed on the stage, owing, it is said, to a conspiracy of some hostile parties, was also well received by the public from the press, and of the novels of Sidney Bidulph and Nourjahad, all written in the darkest hours of a life of struggle and disappointment, which a complication of diseases terminated in 1766, at the age of forty-two ; Mrs. Brooke (whose maiden name was Miss Frances Moore), the authoress of the novels of *Lady Juliet Mandeville* and *Emily Montague*, and of the musical drama of *Rosina*, as well as of some tragedies and other compositions in prose and verse—among the rest, a periodical work called *The Old*

Maid, which appeared weekly from November, 1755, to July, 1756; Miss Jane Marshall, an Edinburgh lady, of whom there remain the novels of *Clarinda Cathcart* and *Alicia Montague*, which had considerable success on their first appearance, in 1765 and 1767, and the comedy of *Sir Harry Gaylove*, printed in 1772, although never acted, but whose most interesting production is a *Series of Letters*, in two volumes, Edinburgh, 1788, in which she gives a naïve and lively account of the mischances of her literary career; Mrs. Lennox (originally Miss Charlotte Ramsay, a native of New York), whose *Memoirs of Harriet Stuart* appeared in 1751, her *Female Quixote*, or *Adventures of Arabella*, to which Johnson wrote the dedication, in 1752, her *Shakespeare Illustrated* in 1753, her novel of *Sophia* in 1761, her comedy of *The Sister* in 1769, and who did not cease to write till near the end of the century; Miss Sophia Lee, whose two first performances, her amusing comedy of *The Chapter of Accidents*, and her popular romance of *The Recess*, were produced, the former in 1780, the latter in 1783; and Miss Frances Barney, afterwards *Madame D'Arblay*, whose two first novels of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* appeared, the former in 1777, the latter in 1782. To these names may be added, as distinguished in other kinds of writing, blind Anna Williams, Dr. Johnson's friend, whose volume of *Miscellanies* in prose and verse was published in 1766; the learned Miss Elizabeth Carter, whose translation of *Epictetus*, however, and we believe all her other works, had appeared before the commencement of the reign of George III., although she lived till the year 1806; her friend Miss Catherine Talbot, the writer

of a considerable quantity both of prose and verse, now forgotten ; Mrs. Montagu (originally Miss Elizabeth Robinson), the pupil of Dr. Conyers Middleton, and the founder of the Blue Stocking Club, whose once famous Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare was published in 1769, and who survived till the year 1800 ; Mrs. Chapone (Miss Hester Mulso), another friend of Miss Carter, and the favourite correspondent of Samuel Richardson, whose Letters on the Improvement of the Mind appeared in 1773 ; Mrs. Macaulay (originally Miss Catherine Sawbridge, afterwards Mrs. Graham), the notorious republican historian and pamphleteer, whose History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Restoration was published in a succession of volumes between the years 1763 and 1771, and then excited much attention, though now neglected ; and the other female democratic writer, Miss Helen Maria Williams, who did not, however, begin to figure as a politician till after the French Revolution, her only publications that fall to be noticed in this place being some volumes of verse which she gave to the world in 1782 and the two or three following years. Mrs. Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Mrs. Inchbald, and some other female writers who did not obtain the height of their reputation till a later date, had also entered upon the career of authorship within the first quarter of a century of the reign of George III. And to the commencement of that reign is to be assigned perhaps the most brilliant contribution from a female pen that has ever been added to our literature, the collection of the Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, which,

although written many years before, were first published in 1763, about a year after Lady Mary's death. The fourth volume, indeed, did not appear till 1767.

PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS.

To the latter part of the reign of George II. belongs the revival of the Periodical Essay, which formed so distinguishing a feature of our literature in the age of Anne. Political writing, indeed, in this form had been carried on from the era of the *Examiner*, and the *Englishman*, and the *Freeholder*, and Defoe's *Review* and *Mercator*, and the *British Merchant*, with little if any intermission, in various publications; the most remarkable being *The Craftsman*, in which Bolingbroke was the principal writer, and the papers of which, as first collected and reprinted in seven volumes, extend from the 5th of December, 1726, to the 22nd of May, 1731; nor was the work dropped till it had gone on for some years longer. Some attempts had even been made during this interval to supply the place of the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, by periodical papers, ranging, in the same strain, over the general field of morals and manners: Ambrose Philips, for instance, and a number of his friends, in the year 1718 began the publication of a paper entitled 'The Free-thinker, or Essays on Ignorance, Superstition, Bigotry, Enthusiasm, Craft, &c., intermixed with several pieces of wit and humour designed to restore the deluded part of mankind to the use of reason and common sense,' which attracted considerable attention at the time, and was kept up till the numbers made a book of three volumes, which were more than once reprinted. The *Museum* was another similar work,

which commenced in 1746, and also ran to three volumes—Horace Walpole, Akenside, the two Wartons, and other eminent writers being among the contributors; but nothing of this kind that was then produced has succeeded in securing for itself a permanent place in our literature. The next of our periodical works after *The Guardian* that is recognised as one of the classics of the language is *The Rambler*, the first number of which appeared on Tuesday, the 20th of March, 1750, the last (the 208th) on Saturday, the 14th of March, 1752, and all the papers of which, at the rate of two a-week, with the exception only of three or four, were the composition of Samuel Johnson, who may be said to have first become generally known as a writer through this publication. *The Rambler* was succeeded by *The Adventurer*, edited and principally written by Dr. Hawkesworth, which was also published twice a-week, the first number having appeared on Tuesday, the 7th of November, 1752, the last (the 139th) on Saturday, the 9th of March, 1754. Meanwhile *The World*, a weekly paper, had been started under the conduct of Edward Moore, the author of the *Fables for the Female Sex*, the tragedy of *The Gamester*, and other dramatic productions, assisted by Lord Lyttelton, the Earls of Chesterfield, Bath, and Cork, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and other contributors: the first number appeared on Thursday, the 4th of January, 1753; the 209th, and last, on the 30th of December, 1756. And contemporary with *The World*, during a part of this space, was *The Connoisseur*, established and principally written by George Colman, in conjunction with Bonnell Thornton, a writer possessed of considerable wit and humour, which, how-

ever, he dissipated for the most part upon ephemeral topics, being only now remembered for his share in a translation of *Plautus*, also undertaken in concert with his friend *Colman*, the first two volumes of which were published in 1766, two years before his death, at the age of forty-four. The *Connoisseur* was, like *The World*, a weekly publication, and it was continued in 140 numbers, from Thursday, the 31st of January, 1754, to the 30th of September, 1756. We have already mentioned Mrs. Frances Brooke's weekly periodical work entitled *The Old Maid*, which subsisted from November, 1755, to July in the following year; but it is not usually admitted into the collections of the English essayists. The next publication of this class which can be said still to hold a place in our literature is Johnson's *Idler*, which appeared once a-week from Saturday, the 15th of April, 1758, to Saturday, the 5th of April, 1760. And with *The Idler* closes what may be called the second age of the English periodical essayists, which commences with *The Rambler*, and extends over the ten years from 1750 to 1760, the concluding decade of the reign of George II. After this occurs another long interval, in which that mode of writing was dropped, or at least no longer attracted either the favour of the public or the ambition of the more distinguished literary talent of the day; for no doubt attempts still continued to be made, with little or no success, by obscure scribblers, to keep up what had lately been so popular and so graced by eminent names: thus, Hugh Kelly, the author of *The School for Wives*, and some other second-rate dramas, produced during this interval a series of papers in a flashy, juvenile style, under the title of *The Babbler*, which

were afterwards collected in two small volumes; Miss Marshall, the Edinburgh novelist, who has been already mentioned, about the close of the year 1770 set up a periodical paper in London, in which, she tells us, she had the assistance of several gentlemen of known literary merit, although the sale proved insufficient to enable her to go on with it;* and there were of course many more such instances. But we have no series of periodical papers of this time, of the same character with those

* Letters, vol. ii. pp. 202, 229. The very title of this forgotten work is probably now irrecoverable, as well as the names of the meritorious literati who were to lend it the aid of their reputation and abilities. Its ingenious, sensible, and good-humoured projector says, "From a grateful sense of the Duchess of Northumberland's goodness [her first novel had been presented to the queen by the duchess], I sent her grace the introductory paper in manuscript, begging the favour of being allowed the honour of dedicating the work to her grace; and next day I was waited on by a gentleman, probably one of her suite; who informed me that her grace not only accepted the dedication, and would most cheerfully patronize the work, but would also furnish me with some anecdotes which might be useful in the publication. But whether this gentleman, displeased with my *je ne sais quoi*, or disgusted at my Scots accent, had prejudiced her grace against me; or whether my not waiting on the duchess to receive the anecdotes, I cannot say; but I never had the good fortune to hear from my patroness again." In reply to an application she made to Lord Lyttelton for his advice, as to whether she should continue the publication, his lordship wrote—"On considering the question you do me the honour to put to me, my answer is this: if you write for fame, go on; if for money, desist, unless the Duchess of Northumberland or Lord Chesterfield will enable you to bear the expense of continuing the paper till it becomes so well known as to support itself. This they surely could do without any inconvenience to their opulent fortunes; and this I would do, if I were in their circumstances, with great pleasure."

already mentioned, that is still reprinted and read. Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, occupied as it is with the adventures and observations of an individual, placed in very peculiar circumstances, partakes more of the character of a novel than of a succession of miscellaneous papers; and both the letters composing that work and the other delightful essays of the same writer were published occasionally, not periodically or at regular intervals, and only as contributions to the newspapers or other journals of the day,—not by themselves, like the numbers of the *Spectator*, the *Rambler*, and the other works of that description that have been mentioned. Our next series of periodical essays, properly so called, was that which began to be published at Edinburgh, under the name of *The Mirror*, on Saturday, the 23rd of January, 1779, and was continued at the rate of a number a-week till the 27th of May, 1780. The conductor and principal writer of *The Mirror* was the late Henry Mackenzie, who died in Edinburgh, at the age of eighty-six, in 1831, the author of *The Man of Feeling*, published anonymously in 1771, *The Man of the World*, 1773, and *Julia de Roubigné*, 1777, novels after the manner of *Sterne*, which are still universally read, and which have much of the grace and delicacy of style as well as of the pathos of that great master, although without any of his rich and peculiar humour. *The Mirror* was succeeded, after an interval of a few years, by *The Lounger*, also a weekly paper, the first number of which appeared on Saturday, the 5th of February, 1785, Mackenzie being again the leading contributor; the last (the 101st) on the 6th of January, 1787. But with these two publications the spirit of periodical essay-writing, in the

style first made famous by Steele and Addison, expired also in Scotland, as it had already done a quarter of a century before in England.

POLITICAL WRITING.—WILKES.—JUNIUS.

A hotter excitement, in truth, had dulled the public taste to the charms of those ethical and critical disquisitions, whether grave or gay, which it had heretofore found sufficiently stimulating; the violent war of parties, which, after a lull of nearly twenty years, was resumed on the accession of George III., made political controversy the only kind of writing that would now go down with the generality of readers; and first Wilkes's famous *North Briton*, and then the yet more famous *Letters of Junius*, came to take the place of the *Ramblers* and *Idlers*, the *Adventurers* and *Connoisseurs*. The *North Briton*, the first number of which appeared on Saturday, the 5th of June, 1762, was started in opposition to *The Briton*, a paper set up by Smollett in defence of the government on the preceding Saturday, the 29th of May, the day on which Lord Bute had been nominated first lord of the treasury. Smollett and Wilkes had been friends up to this time; but the opposing papers were conducted in a spirit of the bitterest hostility, till the discontinuance of *The Briton* on the 12th of February, 1763, and the violent extinction of *The North Briton* on the 23rd of April following, fifteen days after the resignation of Bute, with the publication of its memorable "No. Forty-five." The celebrity of this one paper has preserved the memory of the *North Briton* to our day, in the same manner as in its own it produced several re-
 sessions of the whole work, which otherwise would

probably have been as speedily and completely forgotten as the rival publication, and as the Auditors, and Monitors, and other organs of the two factions, that in the same contention helped to fill the air with their din for a season, and then were heard of no more than any other quieted noise. Wilkes's brilliancy faded away when he proceeded to commit his thoughts to paper, as if it had dissolved itself in the ink. Like all convivial wits, or shining talkers, he was of course indebted for much of the effect he produced in society to the promptitude and skill with which he seized the proper moment for saying his good things, to the surprise produced by the suddenness of the flash, and to the characteristic peculiarities of voice, action, and manner with which the jest or repartee was set off, and which usually serve as signals or stimulants to awaken the sense of the ludicrous before its expected gratification comes; in writing, little or nothing of all this could be brought into play; but still some of Wilkes's colloquial impromptus that have been preserved are so perfect, considered in themselves, and without regard to the readiness with which they may have been struck out,—are so true and deep, and evince so keen a feeling at once of the ridiculous and of the real,—that one wonders at finding so little of the same kind of power in his more deliberate efforts. In all his published writings that we have looked into—and, what with essays, and pamphlets of one kind and another, they fill a good many volumes—we scarcely recollect anything that either in matter or manner rises above the veriest common-place, unless perhaps it be a character of Lord Chatham, occurring in a letter addressed to the Duke of Grafton, some of the biting things in which are impregnated with rather a

subtle venom. A few of his verses also have some fancy and elegance, in the style of Carew and Waller. But even his private letters, of which two collections have been published, scarcely ever emit a sparkle. And his House of Commons speeches, which he wrote beforehand, and got by heart, are equally unenlivened. It is evident, indeed, that he had not intellectual lung enough for any protracted exertion or display. The soil of his mind was a hungry, unproductive gravel, with some gems imbedded in it. The author of the Letters of Junius made his *début* about four years after the expiration of The North Briton, his first known communication having appeared in the Public Advertiser on the 28th of April, 1767; but the letters, sixty-nine in number, signed Junius, and forming the collection with which every reader is familiar, extend only over the space from the 21st of January, 1769, to the 2nd of November, 1771.* Thus it appears that this celebrated writer had been nearly two years before the public before he attracted any considerable attention; a proof that the polish of his style was not really the thing that did most to bring him into notoriety; for, although we may admit that the composition of the letters signed Junius is more elaborate and sustained than that of the generality of his contributions to the same newspaper under the name of Brutus, Lucius, Atticus, and Mnemon, yet the difference is by no means so great as to be alone sufficient to account for the prodigious sensation at once excited by the former, after the

* The 69th Letter, addressed to Lord Camden, is without a date; and there are other private letters to Woodfall, the printer of the Public Advertiser, the last two of which are dated 10th May, 1772, and 19th January, 1773.

slight regard with which the latter had been received for so long a time. What, in the first instance at least, more than his rhetoric, made the unknown Junius the object of universal interest, and of very general terror, was undoubtedly the quantity of secret intelligence he showed himself to be possessed of, combined with the unscrupulous boldness with which he was evidently prepared to use it. As has been lately observed, "ministers found, in these letters, proofs of some enemy, some spy, being amongst them."* It was immediately perceived in the

* See an ingenious and striking article by Mr. De Quincy (Autobiography of an English Opium-eater) in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine for December, 1840. Mr. De Quincy, proceeding upon the consideration noticed in the text, places in a new and strong light the identification of Junius with the late Sir Philip Francis, first suggested by Mr. John Taylor in his volume published in 1816, and surely as nearly established now as any matter ever was by merely circumstantial evidence. People are still, indeed, to be met with who doubt or disbelieve; but they may be classed, for the most part, with those crotchety old ladies and gentlemen who in our own day, long after the case was clear enough to all persons of any sense or insight, used to go about arguing for the claims of sundry captains, clergymen, and women to the authorship of the Waverley novels, till Scott's own confession silenced them—if, indeed, they were all put down even by that. They are mostly persons capable of attending to only one consideration at a time—such as that Mr. Burke was skilled in imitating the styles of other writers and disguising his own—that Lord George Germaine was a man of a bad, or at least of a warm, temper—that William Gerard Hamilton evinced in his single speech a faculty of eloquence which, if he was not the author of the Letters of Junius, nobody can imagine what he did with for many years afterwards; as if fifty such insulated facts or fancies as these could outweigh the long unbroken chain of evidence extending over the whole history of Sir Philip Francis, and corroborated, we may say, in every way, excepting only by his

highest circle of political society that the writer was either actually one of the members of the government, or a person who by some means or other had found access to the secrets of the government. And this suspicion, generally diffused, would add tenfold interest to the mystery of the authorship of the letters, even where the feeling which it had excited was one of mere curiosity, as it

own confession, in which it was possible that it should be corroborated—by many peculiarities of expression common to the letters and the acknowledged writings of their suspected author, by strong general similarity of style, by evident identity of handwriting, nor least of all by the silence of Francis to his dying day (broken only by a solitary, faint equivocation, still more expressive than silence) under an ascription which, whether he might have regarded it as an imputation or an honour, a man of his temper assuredly never would have submitted to thus tranquilly if it had not been true. His conduct, in fact, amounted to what Scott's also was, to acquiescing in and admitting the justice of the common belief—which if any one supposes that either Francis or Scott would have done, that belief being false, we can only say that he appears to us to mistake the whole characters of the men as widely as it is possible to do. If the humiliation and baseness of such an assumption would not have revolted the self-love and pride of a man like Sir Philip Francis, at any rate he was not a fool, and the mere risk of detection and deplumation, which might have happened any day, would have prevented him from enduring his false feathers. It was a case for an affidavit in a court of justice, if nothing less strenuous would serve the purpose; but there were many other ways by which, if he could not effectually put down the suspicion, he might at any rate have completely relieved himself from the charge of countenancing or encouraging it. We may remark, by the by, that the identification of the handwriting of Junius and Sir Philip Francis has been lately made more clear and convincing than ever by some comparative specimens published along with the *Correspondence of Lord Chatham*, 4 vols. 8vo. Lond., 1839. These specimens leave it hardly possible to doubt that the one hand is merely other disguised.

would be, of course, with the mass of the public. But, although it was not his style alone, or even chiefly, that first made Junius famous, it is probably that, more than anything else, which has preserved his fame to our day. More even than the secret, so long in being penetrated, of his real name: that might have given occasion to abundance of conjecture and speculation, like the problem of the Iron Mask and other similar enigmas; but it would not have prompted the reproduction of the letters in innumerable editions, and made them, what they long were, one of the most popular and generally read books in the language, retaining their hold upon the public mind to a degree which perhaps never was equalled by any other literary production having so special a reference, in the greater part of it, to topics of a temporary nature. It has been remarked, with considerable truth, that power of expression is a surer preservative of a writer's popularity than even strength of thought itself; that a book in which the former exists in a remarkable degree is almost sure to live, even if it should have very little else to recommend it. The style of Junius is deficient in some of the higher qualities of good writing; it has few natural graces, little variety, no picturesqueness; but still it is a striking and peculiar style, combining the charm of high polish with great nerve and animation, clear and rapid, and at the same time sonorous,—masculine enough, and yet making a very imposing display of all the artifices of antithetical rhetoric. As for the spirit of these famous letters, it is a remarkable attestation to the author's power of writing that they were long universally regarded as dictated by the very genius of English liberty, and as almost a sort of Bible, or heaven-

inspired exposition, of popular principles and rights. They contain, no doubt, many sound maxims, tersely and vigorously expressed ; but of profound or farsighted political philosophy, or even of ingenious disquisition, having the semblance of philosophy, there is as little in the Letters of Junius as there is in the Diary of Dodington or of Pepys ; and, as for the writer's principles, they seem to be as much the produce of mere temper, and of his individual animosities and spites, as even of his partisan habits and passions. He defends the cause of liberty itself in the spirit of tyranny ; there is no generosity, or even common fairness, in his mode of combating ; the newest lie, or private scandal, of the day serves as well, and as frequently, as anything else to point his sarcasm, or to arm as with livid lightning the thunder of declamatory invective that resounds through his pages ; indeed, much of the popularity long enjoyed by these letters, as well as of the impression they made when they first appeared, is probably to be attributed to the singular fact that they supply, besides what other matter they may contain, a tolerably abundant *chronique scandaleuse* of the time—that this great public writer, the eloquent expounder and vindicator of constitutional principles and popular rights, is at the same time the chief recorder and preserver, at least in decent language, of the amours of the Duke of Grafton and Lord Irnham, and of the most piquant passages in the lives of Miss Kennedy, Miss Davis, and Nancy Parsons.

JOHNSON.

The character of Junius was drawn, while the mysterious shadow was still occupying the public gaze with

its handwriting upon the wall, by one of the most distinguished of his contemporaries, in a publication which made a considerable noise in its day, but is now very much forgotten :—"Junius has sometimes made his satire felt, but let not injudicious admiration mistake the venom of the shaft for the vigour of the bow. He has sometimes sported with lucky malice ; but to him that knows his company it is not hard to be sarcastic in a mask. While he walks, like Jack the Giant-killer, in a coat of darkness, he may do much mischief with little strength. . . . Junius burst into notice with a blaze of impudence which has rarely glared upon the world before, and drew the rabble after him as a monster makes a show. When he had once provided for his safety by impenetrable secrecy, he had nothing to combat but truth and justice—enemies whom he knows to be feeble in the dark. Being then at liberty to indulge himself in all the immunities of invisibility ; out of the reach of danger, he has been bold ; out of the reach of shame, he has been confident. As a rhetorician, he has had the art of persuading when he seconded desire ; as a reasoner, he has convinced those who had no doubt before ; as a moralist, he has taught that virtue may disgrace ; and, as a patriot, he has gratified the mean by insults on the high. Finding sedition ascendant, he has been able to advance it ; finding the nation combustible, he has been able to inflame it. . . . It is not by his liveliness of imagery, his pungency of periods, or his fertility of allusion that he detains the cits of London and the boors of Middlesex. Of style and sentiment they take no cognizance : they admire him for virtues like their own, for contempt of order and violence of outrage, for rage of defamation

and audacity of falsehood. . . . Junius in an unusual phenomenon, on which some have gazed with wonder, and some with terror; but wonder and terror are transitory passions. He will soon be more closely viewed, or more attentively examined; and what folly has taken for a comet, that from its flaming hair shook pestilence and war, inquiry will find to be only a meteor formed by the vapours of putrefying democracy, and kindled into flame by the effervescence of interest struggling with conviction; which, after having plunged its followers into a bog, will leave us inquiring why we regard it." Thus wrote, in his ponderous but yet vigorous way, Samuel Johnson, in his pamphlet entitled '*Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*,' published in 1771, in answer, as is commonly stated, to Junius's Forty-second Letter, dated the 30th of January in that year. Junius, although he continued to write for a twelvemonth longer, never took any notice of this attack; and Mrs. Piozzi tells us that Johnson "often delighted his imagination with the thoughts of having destroyed Junius." The lively lady, however, is scarcely the best authority on the subject of Johnson's *thoughts*, although we may yield a qualified faith to her reports of what he actually said and did. He may, probably enough, have thought, and said too, that he had beaten or silenced Junius, referring to the question discussed in his unanswered pamphlet; although, on the other hand, it does not appear that Junius was in the habit of ever noticing such general attacks as this: he replied to some of the writers who addressed him in the columns of the *Public Advertiser*, the newspaper in which his own communications were published, but he did not think it necessary to go forth to battle with

any of the other pamphleteers by whom he was assailed, any more than with Johnson. The great lexicographer winds up his character of Junius by remarking that he cannot think his style secure from criticism, and that his expressions are often trite, and his periods feeble. The style of Junius, nevertheless, was probably to a considerable extent formed upon Johnson's own. It has some strongly marked features of distinction, but yet it resembles the Johnsonian style much more than it does that of any other writer in the language antecedent to Johnson. Born in 1709, Johnson, after having while still resident in the country commenced his connexion with the press by some work in the way of translation and magazine writing, came to London, along with his friend and pupil, the afterwards celebrated David Garrick, in March, 1737; and forthwith entered upon a career of authorship which extends over nearly half a century. His poem of London, an imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal, appeared in 1738; his Life of Savage, in a separate form, in 1744 (having been previously published in the Gentleman's Magazine); his poem entitled The Vanity of Human Wishes, an imitation of Juvenal's Tenth Satire, in 1749; his tragedy of Irene (written before he came up to London), the same year; The Rambler, as already mentioned, between March, 1750, and March, 1752; his Dictionary of the English Language in 1755; The Idler between April, 1758, and April, 1760; his Rasselas in 1759; his edition of Shakspeare in 1765; his Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland in 1775; his Lives of the Poets in 1781; the intervals between these more remarkable efforts having given birth to ma

magazine articles, verses, and pamphlets, which need not be here enumerated. His death took place on the 13th of December, 1784. All the works the titles of which have been given may be regarded as having taken and kept their places in our standard literature; and they form, in quantity at least, a respectable contribution from a single mind. But Johnson's mind is scarcely seen at its brightest if we do not add to the productions of his own pen the record of his colloquial wit and eloquence preserved by his admirable biographer, Boswell, whose renowned work first appeared, in two volumes quarto, in 1790; having, however, been preceded by the *Journal of the Tour to the Hebrides*, which was published the year after Johnson's death. It has been remarked, with truth, that his own works and Boswell's *Life* of him together have preserved a more complete portraiture of Johnson, of his intellect, his opinions, his manners, his whole man inward and outward, than has been handed down from one age to another of any other individual that ever lived. Certainly no celebrated figure of any past time still stands before our eyes so distinctly embodied as he does. If we will try, we shall find that all others are shadows, or mere outlines, in comparison; or, they seem to skulk about at a distance in the shade, while he is there fronting us in the full daylight, so that we see not only his worsted stockings and the metal buttons on his brown coat, but every feature of that massive countenance, as it is solemnized by meditation or lighted up in social converse, as his whole frame rolls about in triumphant laughter, or, as Cumberland saw the tender-hearted old man, standing beside his friend Garrick's open grave, at the foot of Shakspeare's monu-

ment, and bathed in tears. A noble heroic nature was that of this Samuel Johnson, beyond all controversy : not only did his failings lean to virtue's side—his very intellectual weaknesses and prejudices had something in them of strength and greatness—they were the exuberance and excess of a rich mind, not the stunted growth of a poor one. There was no touch of meanness in him : rude and awkward enough he was in many points of mere demeanour, but he had the soul of a prince in real generosity, refinement, and elevation. Of a certain kind of intellectual faculty, also, his endowment was very high. His quickness of penetration, and readiness in every way, were probably as great as had ever been combined with the same solid qualities of mind. Scarcely before had there appeared so thoughtful a sage, and so grave a moralist, with so agile and sportive a wit. Rarely has so prompt and bright a wit been accompanied by so much real knowledge, sagacity, and weight of matter. But, as we have intimated, this happy union of opposite kinds of power was most complete, and only produced its full effect, in his colloquial displays, when, excited and unformalized, the man was really himself, and his strong nature forced its way onward without regard to anything but the immediate object to be achieved. In writing he is still the strong man, working away valiantly, but, as it were, with fetters upon his limbs, or a burden on his back ; a sense of the conventionalities of his position seems to oppress him ; his style becomes artificial and ponderous ; the whole process of his intellectual exertion loses much of its elasticity and life ; and, instead of hard blows and flashes of flame, there is too often, it must be confessed, a mere raising of clouds of dust and

the din of inflated commonplace. Yet, as a writer, too, there is much in Johnson that is of no common character. It cannot be said that the world is indebted to him for many new truths, but he has given novel and often forcible and elegant expression to some old ones; the spirit of his philosophy is always manly and high-toned, as well as moral; his critical speculations, if not always very profound, are frequently acute and ingenious, and in manner generally lively, not seldom brilliant: indeed, it may be said of Johnson, with all his faults and shortcomings, as of every man of true genius, that he is rarely or never absolutely dull. Even his *Ramblers*, which we hold to be the most indigestible of his productions, are none of them mere leather or prunello; and his higher efforts, his *Rasselas*, his *Preface to Shakespeare*, and many passages in his *Lives of the Poets*, are throughout instinct with animation, and full of an eloquence which sometimes rises almost to poetry. Even his peculiar style, whatever we may allege against it, bears the stamp of the man of genius; it was thoroughly his own; and it not only reproduced itself, with variations, in the writings of some of the most distinguished of his contemporaries, from Junius's *Letters* down to Macpherson's *Ossian*, but, whether for good or for evil, has perceptibly influenced our literature, and even in some degree the progress of the language, onwards to the present day. Some of the characteristics of the Johnsonian style, no doubt, may be found in elder writers, but, as a whole, it must be regarded as the invention of Johnson. No composition at once so uniformly clear and exact, and so elaborately stately, measured, and sonorous, had proceeded habitually from any previous

English pen. The pomposity and inflation of Johnson's style abated considerably in his own later writings, and as the cumbering flesh fell off, the nerve and spirit increased: the most happily executed parts of the *Lives of the Poets* offer almost a contrast to the oppressive roundness of the *Ramblers*, produced thirty years before; and some eminent writers of a subsequent date, who have yet evidently formed their style upon his, have retained little or nothing of what, to a superficial inspection, seem the most marked characteristics of his manner of expression. Indeed, as we have said, there is perhaps no subsequent English prose-writer upon whose style that of Johnson has been altogether without its effect.

BURKE.

But the greatest, undoubtedly, of all our writers of this age was Burke, one of the most remarkable men of any age. Edmund Burke was born in Dublin, in 1730; but he came over in 1750 to the British metropolis, and he mostly resided in this country till his death, in 1797. In 1756 he published his celebrated *Vindication of Natural Society*, an imitation of the style, and a parody on the philosophy, of Lord Bolingbroke; and the same year his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. In 1757 appeared anonymously his *Account of the European Settlements in America*. In 1759 came out the first volume of *The Annual Register*, of which he is known to have written, or superintended the writing of, the historical part for several years. His public life commenced in 1761, with the appointment of private secretary to the chief secretary for Ireland, an office which carried him back for about three years to his native country. In

1766 he became a member of the English House of Commons; and from that date almost to the hour of his death, besides his exertions as a front figure in the debates and other business of parliament, from which he did not retire till 1794, he continued to dazzle the world by a succession of political writings such as certainly had never before been equalled in brilliancy and power. We can mention only those of greatest note:—his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, published in 1770; his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published in 1790; his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, in 1792; his *Letter to a Noble Lord on his Pension*, in 1796; his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, in 1796 and 1797; his *Observations on the Conduct of the Minority*, in 1797; besides his several great speeches, revised and sent to the press by himself; that on *American Taxation*, in 1774; that on *Conciliation with America*, in 1775; that on the *Economical Reform Bill*, in 1780; that delivered in the *Guildhall at Bristol* previous to his election, the same year; that on *Mr. Fox's India Bill*, in 1783; and that on the *Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, in 1785: those, perhaps the most splendid of all, which he delivered at the bar of the House of Lords, in 1789, on the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, have also been printed since his death from his own manuscript. Burke was our first, and is still our greatest, writer on the philosophy of practical politics. The mere metaphysics of that science, or what we may call by that term for want of a better, meaning thereby all abstract speculation and theorizing on the general subject of government without reference to the actual circumstances of the particular country and people to be

governed, he held from the beginning to the end of his life in undisguised, perhaps in undue, contempt. This feeling is as strongly manifested in his very first publication, his covert attack on Bolingbroke, as either in his writings and speeches on the contest with the American colonies, or in those of the French Revolution. He was, as we have said, emphatically a practical politician, and, above all, an English politician. In discussing questions of domestic politics, he constantly refused to travel beyond the landmarks of the constitution as he found it established; and the views he took of the politics of other countries were as far as possible regulated by the same principle. The question of a revolution, in so far as England was concerned, he did not hold to be one with which he had anything to do. Not only had it never been actually presented to him by the circumstances of the time; he did not conceive that it ever could come before him. He was, in fact, no believer in the possibility of any sudden and complete re-edification of the institutions of a great country; he left such transformations to Harlequin's wand and the machinists of the stage; he did not think they could take place in a system so mighty and so infinitely complicated as that of the political organization of a nation. A constitution, too, in his idea, was not a thing, like a steam-engine, or a machine for threshing corn, that could be put together and set up in a few weeks or months, and that would work equally well wherever it was set up; he looked upon it rather as something that must in every case grow and gradually evolve itself out of the soil of the national mind and character, that must take its shape in a great measure from the prevalent habits and feelings to

which it was to be accommodated, that would not work or stand at all unless it thus formed an integral part of the social system to which it belonged. The notion of a constitution artificially constructed, and merely as it were fastened upon a country by bolts and screws, was to him much the same as the notion of a human body performing the functions of life with no other than such a separate artificial head stuck upon it. A constitution was with him a thing of life. It could no more be set up of a sudden than a full-grown tree could be ordered from the manufacturer's and so set up. Like a tree, it must have its roots intertwined with the earth on which it stands, even as it has its branches extended over it. Or rather, the constitution is to him the earth itself—the one solid enduring basis on which alone any rational or useful speculation can be reared. At the least, it is his Bible, the great authoritative text-book of his political religion, which he no more looks for anything to contradict or supersede than the theologian looks for a new revelation. It may be observed that Burke's peculiar faculties did not fit him, any more than his tastes, for nice and subtle inquisition into the essences of things; as may be perceived, to go no farther, from his early work on the *Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, which, elegant and ingenious as it is, must be deemed a failure in so far as respects its professed object, and the spirit of which, as has been observed, is, on the whole, certainly rather critical than metaphysical.* In

* See art. on Burke in 'Penny Cyclopædia,' vi. 31. See also an examination and refutation of Burke's theory in an article in the same work, vol. xxiii. pp. 186-189, on *Sublimity*, which is not only the best disquisition that has been

the great fields of politics and religion, besides, occupied as they are with men's substantial interests, he regarded inquiries into first principles as worse than vain and worthless, as much more likely to mislead and pervert than to afford instruction or right guidance; and it is remarkable that this feeling, too, though deepened and strengthened by the experience of his after-life, and, above all, exasperated by the events to which his attention was most strongly directed in his latest days into an intense dread and horror of the confusion and wide-spread ruin that might be wrought by the assumption of so incompetent a power as mere human ratiocination to regulate all things according to its own conceit, was entertained and expressed by him with great distinctness at the outset of his career. It was in this spirit, indeed, that he wrote his *Vindication of Natural Society*, with the design of showing how anything whatever might be either attacked or defended with great plausibility by the method in which the highest and most intricate philosophical questions were discussed by Lord Bolingbroke. He "is satisfied," he says in his Preface, "that a mind which has no restraint from a sense of its own weakness, of its subordinate rank in the creation, and of the extreme danger of letting the imagination loose upon some subjects, may very plausibly attack everything the most excellent and venerable; that it would not be difficult to criticise the Creation itself; and that, if we were to examine the divine fabrics by our ideas of reason and fitness, and to use the same method of attack by which some men have assaulted revealed religion, we might, written on the philosophy of that subject, but almost the only one of any value.

with as good colour, and with the same success, make the wisdom and power of God in his Creation appear to many no better than foolishness." But, on the other hand, within the boundary by which he conceived himself to be properly limited and restrained, there never was either a more ingenious and profound investigator or a bolder reformer than Burke. He had, indeed, more in him of the orator and of the poet than of the mere reasoner; but yet, like Bacon, whom altogether he greatly resembled in intellectual character, an instinctive sagacity and penetration generally led him to see where the truth lay, and then his boundless ingenuity supplied him readily with all the considerations and arguments which the exposition of the matter required, and the fervour of his awakened fancy with striking illustration and impassioned eloquence in a measure hardly to be elsewhere found intermingled and incorporated with the same profoundness, extent, and many-sidedness of view. For in this Burke is distinguished from nearly all other orators, and it is a distinction that somewhat interferes with his mere oratorical power, that he is both too reflective and too honest to confine himself to the contemplation of only one side of any question he takes up: he selects, of course, for advocacy and inculcation the particular view which he holds to be the sound one, and often it will no doubt be thought by those who dissent from him that he does not do justice to some of the considerations that stand opposed to his own opinion; but still it is not his habit to overlook such adverse considerations; he shows himself at least perfectly aware of their existence, even when he possibly underrates their portance. For the immediate effect of his eloquence,

as we have said, it might have been better if his mind had not been so Argus-eyed to all the various contradictory points of every case that he discussed—if, instead of thus continually looking before and after on all sides of him, and stopping, whenever two or more apparently opposite considerations came in his way, to balance or reconcile them, he could have surrendered himself to the one view with which his hearers were prepared strongly to sympathise, and carried them along with him in a whirlwind of passionate declamation. But, “born for the universe,” and for all time, he was not made for such sacrifice of truth, and all high, enduring things, to the triumph of an hour. And he has not gone without his well-earned reward. If it was objected to him in his own day that, “too deep for his hearers,” he

“still went on refining,

And thought of convincing while they thought of dining,”

that searching philosophy which pervades his speeches and writings, and is there wedded in such happy union to glowing words and poetic imagery, has rescued them alone from the neglect and oblivion that have overtaken all the other oratory and political pamphleteering of that day, however more loudly lauded at the time, and has secured to them an existence as extended as that of the language, and to their eloquence and wisdom whatever admiration and whatever influence and authority they may be entitled to throughout all coming generations. The writings of Burke are, indeed, the only English political writings of a past age that continue to be read in the present. And they are now perhaps more studied, and their value, both philosophical and

oratorical, better and more highly appreciated, than even when they were first produced. They were at first probably received, even by those who rated them highest and felt their power the most, as little more than mere party appeals—which, indeed, to a considerable extent most of them were, for their author, from the circumstances of his position and of the time, was of necessity involved in the great battle of faction which then drew into its maelstrom everything littlest and greatest, meanest and loftiest—and, as was his nature, he fought that fight, while that was the work to be done, like a man, with his whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. But it can hardly be said in prosaic verity, as it has been said in the liveliness and levity of verse, that he “to party gave up what was meant for mankind.” He gave up nothing to his party, except his best exertions for the time being, and for the end immediately in view, while he continued to serve under its banner. He separated himself from his party, and even from the friends and associates with whom he had passed his life, when, whether rightly or wrongly, he conceived that a higher duty than that of fidelity to his party-banner called upon him to take that course. For that Burke, in leaving the ranks of the opposition in the year 1790, or rather in declining to go along with the main body of the opposition in the view which they took at that particular moment of the French Revolution, acted from the most conscientious motives and the strongest convictions, we may assume to be now completely admitted by all whose opinions anybody thinks worth regarding. The notion that he was bought off by the ministry—he ho never to the end of his life joined the ministry, or

ceased to express his entire disapprobation of their conduct of the war with France—he, by whom, in fact, they were controlled and coerced, not he by them—the old cry that he was paid to attack the French Revolution, by the pension, forsooth, that was bestowed upon him five years after—all this is now left to the rabid ignorance of your mere pothouse politician. Those who have really read and studied what Burke has written, know that there was nothing new in the views he proclaimed after the breaking out of that mighty convulsion, nothing different from or inconsistent with the principles and doctrines on the subject of government he had always held and expressed. In truth, he could not have joined in the chorus of acclamation with which Fox and many of his friends greeted the advent of the French Revolution without abandoning the political philosophy of his whole previous life. As we have elsewhere observed, “his principles were altogether averse from a purely democratic constitution of government from the first. He always, indeed, denied that he was a man of aristocratic inclinations, meaning by that one who favoured the aristocratic more than the popular element in the constitution: but he no more for all that ever professed any wish wholly to extinguish the former element than the latter. . . . The only respect in which his latest writings really differ from those of earlier date is, that they evince a more excited sense of the dangers of popular delusion and passion, and urge with greater earnestness the importance of those restraining institutions which the author conceives, and always did conceive, to be necessary for the stability of governments and the conservation of society. But this is nothing more than the change of

topic that is natural to a new occasion."* Or, as he has himself finely said, in defending his own consistency—"A man, who, among various objects of his equal regard, is secure of some, and full of anxiety for the fate of others, is apt to go to much greater lengths in his preference of the objects of his immediate solicitude than Mr. Burke has ever done. A man so circumstanced often seems to undervalue, to vilify, almost to reprobate and disown, those that are out of danger. This is the voice of nature and truth, and not of inconsistency and false pretence. The danger of anything very dear to us removes, for the moment, every other affection from the mind. When Priam had his whole thoughts employed on the body of his Elector, he repels with indignation, and drives from him with a thousand reproaches, his surviving sons; who with an officious piety crowded about him to offer their assistance. A good critic would say that this is a master-stroke, and marks a deep understanding of nature in the father of poetry. He would despise a Zoilus, who would conclude from this passage that Homer meant to represent this man of affliction as hating, or being indifferent and cold in his affections to, the poor relics of his house, or that he preferred a dead carcase to his living children."†

We shall now proceed to illustrate, as far as our limited space will allow, both the variety and the progress of Burke's style by a series of extracts from his works; and we will begin with a passage from his earliest separate publication (so far as is known), his Letter on Natural Society, written in imitation of Lord Bolingbroke, which

* Art. on Burke, in Penny Cyclopædia, vi. 35.

† Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.

appeared, as already noticed, in 1756, two years after Bolingbroke's death, and when Burke was only twenty-six. This remarkable performance, Burke's authorship of which he must be a rare literary man who is not aware of, has much perplexed a late learned biographer of Bolingbroke, who, after affirming that "what the ultimate object of the work is, it is difficult to ascertain," proceeds to infer that the author was probably out of his senses, and concludes his judgment upon the matter as follows:—"This work is not Bolingbroke's—no copy of it was found among his papers, nor was any proof ever offered of its genuineness. The peculiarities of his style are sometimes pretty closely imitated, and his enemies were eager to believe that he was equally an enemy to government and religion; but the attentive observer of Bolingbroke's style of thinking and writing will readily detect the imposition. The imitation is often overdone. There are some of his peculiarities, but we look in vain for his beauties." Despite this profound deliverance, we must hold that Bolingbroke never wrote anything equal in brilliancy and elegance to what we are about to quote. The full title of the pamphlet is 'A Vindication of Natural Society; or, A View of the Miseries and Evils arising to mankind from every species of Artificial Society; in a letter to Lord * * * * By a late Noble writer.' As for the design, or "ultimate object," with which it was written, it is explained in the preface which accompanies it in all the editions of Burke's works, and a part of which we have quoted a page or two back. Having disposed of both despotic and aristocratical governments, he proceeds:—

Thus, my Lord, we have pursued *Aristocracy* through

its whole progress ; we have seen the seeds, the growth, and the fruit. It could boast none of the advantages of a *despotism*, miserable as those advantages were, and it was overloaded with an exuberance of mischiefs unknown even to *despotism* itself. In effect, it is no more than a disorderly tyranny. This form, therefore, could be little approved, even in speculation, by those who were capable of thinking, and could be less borne in practice by any who were capable of feeling. However, the fruitful policy of man was not yet exhausted. He had yet another farthing candle to supply the deficiencies of the sun. This was the third form, known by political writers under the name of *democracy*. Here the people transacted all public business, or the greater part of it, in their own persons : their laws were made by themselves, and, upon any failure of duty, their officers were accountable to themselves, and to them only. In all appearance they had secured by this method the advantages of order and good government, without paying their liberty for the purchase. Now, my Lord, we are come to the master-piece of Grecian refinement and Roman solidity, a popular government. The earliest and most celebrated republic of this model was that of Athens. It was constructed by no less an artist than the celebrated poet and philosopher, Solon. But no sooner was this political vessel launched from the stocks, than it upset, even in the lifetime of the builder. A tyranny immediately supervened ; not by a foreign conquest, not by accident, but by the very nature and constitution of a *democracy*. An artful man became popular, the people had power in their hands, and they devolved a considerable share of their power upon their favourite ; and the only use he made of this power was to plunge those who gave it into slavery. Accident restored their liberty, and the same good fortune produced men of uncommon abilities and uncommon virtues amongst them. But these abilities were suffered to be of little service either to their possessors or to the state. Some of those men, for whose sakes alone we read their history, they banished ; others they imprisoned ; and

all they treated with various circumstances of the most shameful ingratitude. Republics have many things in the spirit of absolute monarchy, but none more than this. A shining merit is ever hated or suspected in a popular assembly, as well as in a court; and all services done the state are looked upon as dangerous to the rulers, whether sultans or senators. The *Ostracism* of Athens was built upon this principle. The giddy people whom we have now under consideration, being elated with some flashes of success, which they owed to nothing less than any merit of their own, began to tyrannize over their equals, who had associated with them for their common defence. With their prudence, they renounced all appearance of justice. They entered into wars rashly and wantonly. If they were unsuccessful, instead of growing wiser by their misfortune, they threw the whole blame of their own misconduct on the ministers who had advised, and the generals who had conducted, those wars; until by degrees they had cut off all who could serve them in their councils or their battles. If at any time these wars had a happier issue, it was no less difficult to deal with them on account of their pride and insolence. Furious in their adversity, tyrannical in their successes, a commander had more trouble to concert his defence before the people than to plan the operations of the campaign. It was not uncommon for a general, under the horrid *despotism* of the Roman emperors, to be ill received in proportion to the greatness of his services. Agricola is a strong instance of this. No man had done greater things, nor with more honest ambition. Yet, on his return to Court, he was obliged to enter Rome with all the secrecy of a criminal. He went to the palace, not like a victorious commander who had merited, and might demand, the greatest rewards, but like an offender who had come to supplicate a pardon for his crimes. His reception was answerable. *Exceptusque brevi osculo et nullo sermone, turbæ servientium immixtus est.* Yet in that worst season of this worst of monarchical tyrannies, modesty, discretion, and coolness of temper formed some kind of security even

for the highest merit. But at Athens, the wisest and best studied behaviour was not a sufficient guard for a man of great capacity. Some of their bravest commanders were obliged to fly their country, some to enter into the service of its enemies, rather than abide a popular determination on their conduct, lest, as one of them said, their giddiness might make the people condemn where they meant to acquit,—to throw in a black bean even when they intended a white one.

The Athenians made a very rapid progress to the most enormous excesses. The people, under no restraint, soon grew dissolute, luxurious, and idle. They renounced all labour, and began to subsist themselves from the public revenues. They lost all concern for their common honour or safety, and could bear no advice that tended to reform them. At this time truth became offensive to those lords, the people, and most highly dangerous to the speaker. The orators no longer ascended the *rostrum* but to corrupt them further with the most fulsome adulation. These orators were all bribed by foreign princes on the one side or the other. And, beside its own parties, in this city there were parties, and avowed ones too, for the Persians, Spartans, and Macedonians, supported each of them by one or more demagogues pensioned and bribed to this iniquitous service. The people, forgetful of all virtue and public spirit, and intoxicated with the flatteries of their orators (these courtiers of republics, and endowed with the distinguishing characteristics of all other courtiers),—this people, I say, at last arrived at that pitch of madness, that they coolly and deliberately, by an express law, made it capital for any man to propose an application of the immense sums squandered in public shows even to the most necessary purposes of the state. When you see the people of this republic banishing and murdering their best and ablest citizens, dissipating the public treasure with the most senseless extravagance, and spending their whole time, as spectators or actors, in playing, fiddling, dancing, or singing, does it not, my Lord, strike your imagination with the image of a sort of complex Nero? And does it not strike you

with the greater horror, when you observe, not one man only, but a whole city, grown drunk with pride and power, running with a rage of folly into the same mean and senseless debauchery and extravagance? But, if this people resembled Nero in their extravagance, much more did they resemble and even exceed him in cruelty and injustice. In the time of Pericles, one of the most celebrated times in the history of that commonwealth, a king of Egypt sent them a donation of corn. This they were mean enough to accept; and, had the Egyptian prince intended the ruin of this city of wicked bedlamites, he could not have taken a more effectual method to do it than by such an ensnaring largess. The distribution of this bounty caused a quarrel; the majority set on foot an inquiry into the title of the citizens, and upon a vain pretence of illegitimacy, newly and occasionally set up, they deprived of their share of the royal donation no less than five thousand of their own body. They went further; they disfranchised them; and, having once begun with an act of injustice, they could set no bounds to it. Not content with cutting them off from the rights of citizens, they plundered these unfortunate wretches of all their substance; and, to crown this master-piece of violence and tyranny, they actually sold every man of the five thousand as slaves in the public market. Observe, my Lord, that the five thousand we here speak of were cut off from a body of no more than nineteen thousand; for the entire number of citizens was no greater at that time. Could the tyrant who wished the Roman people but one neck—could the tyrant Caligula himself have done; nay could he scarcely wish for a greater mischief, than to have cut off at one stroke a fourth of his people? Or has the cruelty of that series of sanguine tyrants, the Cæsars, ever presented such a piece of flagrant and extensive wickedness? The whole history of this celebrated republic is but one tissue of rashness, folly, ingratitude, injustice, tumult, violence, and tyranny—and, indeed, of every species of wickedness that can well be imagined. This was a city of wise men in which a minister could not exercise his functions;

a warlike people, amongst whom a general did not dare either to gain or lose a battle; a learned nation in which a philosopher could not venture on a free inquiry. This was the city which banished Themistocles, starved Aristides, forced into exile Miltiades, drove out Anaxagoras, and poisoned Socrates. This was a city which changed the form of its government with the moon; eternal conspiracies, revolutions daily, nothing fixed and established. A republic, as an ancient philosopher has observed, is no one species of government, but a magazine of every species: here you find every sort of it, and that in the worst form. As there is a perpetual change, one rising and the other falling, you have all the violence and wicked policy by which a beginning power must always acquire its strength, and all the weakness by which falling states are brought to a complete destruction.

In some respects this early composition may stand a comparison with anything its author ever afterwards wrote. In free and musical flow his style had already nothing further to acquire; and we have also here not a little of the fulness and hurry of illustration, the splendour of colouring, and the impassioned fervour of his latest eloquence. In its next stage his manner became rather less brilliant and impetuous; what he now for a time chiefly aimed at appears to have been precision and force. The following is from his admirable exposition of the principles of his political party, entitled 'Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents,' published in 1770, or fourteen years after the Vindication of Natural Society:—

The House of Commons was supposed originally to be no part of the standing government of this country. It was considered as a controul, issuing immediately from the people, and speedily to be resolved into the mass from whence it arose. In this respect it was in the higher part of government what juries are in the lower. The

capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity it was hoped would of course preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the crown, but between the people and the fleeting authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped, that, being of a middle nature between subject and government, they would feel with a more tender and a nearer interest every thing that concerned the people than the other remoter and more permanent parts of legislature.

Whatever alterations time, and the necessary accommodation of business, may have introduced, this character can never be sustained unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would, among public misfortunes, be an evil more natural and more tolerable that the House of Commons should be infected with every epidemical frenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature, with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors. By this want of sympathy they would cease to be a House of Commons. For it is not the derivation of the power of that House from the people which makes it in a distinct sense their representative. The king is the representative of the people; so are the Lords; so are the Judges. They all are trustees for the people, as well as the Commons; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder; and, although government certainly is an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.

A popular origin cannot therefore be the characteristic distinction of a popular representative. This belongs equally to all parts of government, and in all forms. The virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a controul *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency. It was designed as a controul

for the people. Other institutions have been formed for the purpose of checking popular excesses; and they are, I apprehend, fully adequate to their object. If not, they ought to be made so. The House of Commons, as it was never intended for the support of peace and subordination, is miserably appointed for that service; having no stronger weapon than its mace, and no better officer than its sergeant-at-arms, which it can command of its own proper authority. A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy, an anxious care of public money, an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint; these seem to be the true characteristics of a House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons and a petitioning nation—a House of Commons full of confidence while the nation is plunged in despair—in the utmost harmony with ministers whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence—who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments—who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account—who, in all disputes between the people and administration, presume against the people—who punish their disorders, but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to them; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate; but it is not, to any popular purpose, a House of Commons. This change from an immediate state of procuration and delegation to a course of acting as from original power is the way in which all the popular magistracies in the world have been perverted from their purposes. It is indeed their greatest and sometimes their incurable corruption. For there is a material distinction between that corruption by which particular points are carried against reason (this is a thing which cannot be prevented by human wisdom, and is of less consequence), and the corruption of the principle itself. For then the evil is not accidental but settled. The distemper becomes the natural habit.

After this, again, although he could when he chose refine himself to a haughty severity of diction, in which

few figures and little visible flame of passion were suffered to relieve the hard native force and impressiveness of the matter—as, for instance, in the Address to the King on the War with America, which he proposed that the opposition should present in 1777,—his style in general returns to a richer and warmer character, both in his speeches and his writings. The following is from his famous Speech delivered at Bristol previous to the election in September, 1780, at which he was rejected by the constituency he had represented during the preceding six years, for the part he had taken in the recent mitigation of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics:—

A statute was fabricated in the year 1699, by which the saying mass (a church-service in the Latin tongue, not exactly the same as our liturgy, but very near it, and containing no offence whatsoever against the laws, or against good morals) was forged into a crime, punishable with perpetual imprisonment. The teaching school, an useful and virtuous occupation, even the teaching in a private family, was in every Catholic subjected to the same unproportioned punishment. Your industry, and the bread of your children, was taxed for a pecuniary reward to stimulate avarice to do what nature refused, to inform and prosecute on this law. Every Roman Catholic was, under the same law, to forfeit his estate to his nearest Protestant relation, until, through a profession of what he did not believe, he redeemed by his hypocrisy what the law had transferred to the kinsman as the recompense of his profligacy. When thus turned out of doors from his paternal estate, he was disabled from acquiring any other by any industry, donation, or charity; but was rendered a foreigner in his native land, only because he retained the religion, along with the property, handed down to him from those who had been the old inhabitants of that land before him.

Does any one who hears me approve this scheme of things, or think there is common justice, common sense,

or common honesty in any part of it? If any does, let him say it, and I am ready to discuss the point with temper and candour. But, instead of approving, I perceive a virtuous indignation beginning to rise in your minds on the mere cold stating of the statute.

But what will you feel when you know from history how this statute passed, and what were the motives, and what the mode, of making it? A party in this nation, enemies to the system of the Revolution, were in opposition to the government of King William. They knew that our glorious deliverer was an enemy to all persecution. They knew that he came to free us from slavery and popery, out of a country where a third of the people are contented Catholics under a Protestant government. He came, with a part of his army composed of those very Catholics, to upset the power of a popish prince. Such is the effect of a tolerating spirit; and so much is liberty served in every way, and by all persons, by a manly adherence to its own principles. Whilst freedom is true to itself, every thing becomes subject to it; and its very adversaries are an instrument in its hands.

The party I speak of (like some amongst us who would disparage the best friends of their country) resolved to make the king either violate his principles of toleration, or incur the odium of protecting Papists. They therefore brought in this bill, and made it purposely wicked and absurd that it might be rejected. The then court-party, discovering their game, turned the tables on them, and returned their bill to them stuffed with still greater absurdities, that its loss might lie upon its original authors. They, finding their own ball thrown back to them, kicked it back again to their adversaries. And thus this act, loaded with the double injustice of two parties, neither of whom intended to pass what they hoped the other would be persuaded to reject, went through the legislature, contrary to the real wish of all parts of it, and of all the parties that composed it. In this manner these insolent and profligate factions, as if they were playing with balls and counters, made a sport of

the fortunes and the liberties of their fellow-creatures. Other acts of persecution have been acts of malice. This was a perversion of justice from wantonness and petulance. Look into the History of Bishop Burnet. He is a witness without exception.

The effects of the act have been as mischievous as its origin was ludicrous and shameful. From that time every person of that communion, lay and ecclesiastic, has been obliged to fly from the face of day. The clergy, concealed in garrets of private houses, or obliged to take a shelter (hardly safe to themselves, but infinitely dangerous to their country) under the privileges of foreign ministers, officiated as their servants, and under their protection. The whole body of the Catholics, condemned to beggary and to ignorance in their native land, have been obliged to learn the principle of letters, at the hazard of all their other principles, from the charity of your enemies. They have been taxed to their ruin at the pleasure of necessitous and profligate relations, and according to the measure of their necessity and profligacy. Examples of this are many and affecting. Some of them are known by a friend who stands near me in this hall. It is but six or seven years since a clergyman of the name of Malony, a man of morals, neither guilty nor accused of any thing noxious to the state, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment for exercising the functions of his religion; and, after lying in jail two or three years, was relieved by the mercy of government from perpetual imprisonment, on condition of perpetual banishment. A brother of the Earl of Shrewsbury, a Talbot, a name respectable in this country whilst its glory is any part of its concern, was hauled to the bar of the Old Bailey, among common felons, and only escaped the same doom either by some error in the process, or that the wretch who brought him there could not correctly describe his person; I now forget which. In short, the persecution would never have relented for a moment, if the judges, superseding (though with an ambiguous example) the strict rule of their artificial duty by the higher obligation of their conscience, did not constantly throw every dif-

ficulty in the way of such informers. But so ineffectual is the power of legal evasion against legal iniquity, that it was but the other day that a lady of condition, beyond the middle of life, was on the point of being stript of her whole fortune by a near relation, to whom she had been a friend and benefactor; and she must have been totally ruined, without a power of redress or mitigation from the courts of law, had not the legislature itself rushed in, and by a special act of parliament rescued her from the injustice of its own statutes. One of the acts authorizing such things was that which we in part repealed; knowing what our duty was, and doing that duty as men of honour and virtue, as good Protestants, and as good citizens. Let him stand forth that disapproves what we have done.

As to the opinion of the people, which some think in such cases is to be implicitly obeyed; nearly two years' tranquillity, which followed the act, and its instant imitation in Ireland, proved abundantly that the late horrible spirit was, in a great measure, the effect of insidious art, and perverse industry, and gross misrepresentation. But suppose that the dislike had been much more deliberate, and much more general, than I am persuaded it was. When we know that the opinions of even the greatest multitudes are the standard of rectitude, I shall think myself obliged to make those opinions the masters of my conscience. But, if it may be doubted whether Omnipotence itself is competent to alter the essential constitution of right and wrong, sure I am that such *things* as they and I are possessed of no such power. No man carries further than I do the policy of making government pleasing to the people. But the widest range of this politic complaisance is confined within the limits of justice. I would not only consult the interest of the people, but I would cheerfully gratify their humours. We are all a sort of children that must be soothed and managed. I think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I would bear, I would even myself play my part in, any innocent buffooneries, to divert them. But I never will act the tyrant for their amusement. If

they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never consent to throw them any living, sentient creature whatsoever, no, not so much as a kitling, to torment.

“But, if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may chance never to be elected into parliament.” It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of parliament to have my share of doing good and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects, in order to obtain my seat. I deceive myself, indeed, most grossly, if I had not much rather pass the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid throne of the universe, tantalized with a denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share in any measure giving quiet to private property, and private conscience; if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the good-will of his countrymen; if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions; I can shut the book: I might wish to read a page or two more, but this is enough for my measure. I have not lived in vain.

And now, gentlemen, on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are brought against me. I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said, that, in the long period of my service, I have in a single instance sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my for-

time. It is not alleged, that, to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man of any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind;—that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress,—I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted.

As another specimen of Burke's spoken eloquence we will give from his Speech on the case of the Nabob of Arcot, delivered in the House of Commons on the 28th of February, 1785, the passage containing the description of Hyder Ali's devastation of the Carnatic:—

When at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men who either would sign no convention, or whom no treaty and no signature could bind, and who were the determined enemies of human intercourse itself, he decreed to make the country possessed by these incorrigible and predestinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length so confident of his force, so collected in his might, that he made no secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy, and every rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation against the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot,* he drew from every quarter what-

* The designs upon Hyder, which provoked this retaliation on his part, are represented in the speech as the scheme of the Nabob's English creditors.

ever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of destruction ; and, compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation, into one black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the plains of the Carnatic. Then ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of were mercy to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants, flying from their flaming villages, in part were slaughtered ; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank, or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest fled to the walled cities. But, escaping from fire, sword, and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful exigency, were certainly liberal ; and all was done by charity that private charity could do ; but it was a people in beggary, a nation which stretched out its hands for food. For months together these creatures of sufferance, whose very excess and luxury in their most plenteous days had fallen short of the allowance of our austere fasts, silent, patient, resigned, without sedition or disturbance, almost without complaint, perished by an hundred a day in the streets of Madras ; every day seventy at least laid their bodies in the streets, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of famine in the granary of India. I was going to awake your justice towards this unhappy part of our fellow-citizens, by bringing before you some of the circumstances of this plague of hunger. Of all the calamities which beset and waylay the life of man, this comes

the nearest to our heart, and is that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is : but I find myself unable to manage it with decorum ; these details are of a species of horror so nauseous and disgusting ; they are so degrading to the sufferers and to the hearers ; they are so humiliating to human nature itself ; that, on better thoughts, I find it more advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object, and to leave it to your general conceptions.

For eighteen months without intermission, this destruction raged from the gates of Madras to the gates of Tanjore ; and so completely did these masters in their art, Hyder Ali and his ferocious son, absolve themselves of their impious vow, that, when the British armies traversed, as they did, the Carnatic for hundreds of miles in all directions, through the whole line of their march they did not see one man, not one woman, not one child, not one four-footed beast of any description whatever. One dead, uniform silence reigned over the whole region.

With this may be compared the much longer and still more powerful description of the cruelties alleged to have been perpetrated by the Rajah Debi Sing upon the ryots of Rung-pore and Dinagepore, contained in the Speech delivered at the bar of the House of Lords on the fifth day of the trial of Warren Hastings, the 17th of February, 1788. It ought to be read in the report printed from Burke's own papers in the authentic edition of his works. And there may be seen how he triumphs over the difficulties of a subject more perilous than that of the sufferings from hunger of the inhabitants of the Carnatic. It is a wonderful example of how the fire of strong imagination burns out all stains.

It is a mistake to suppose that either imagination or passion is apt to become weaker as the other powers of the mind strengthen and acquire larger scope. The history of all the greatest poetical minds of all times and coun-

tries confutes this notion. Burke's imagination grew with his intellect, by which it was nourished, with his ever extending realm of thought, with his constantly increasing experience of life and knowledge of every kind ; and his latest writings are his most splendid as well as his most profound. Undoubtedly the work in which his eloquence is at once the most highly finished, and the most impregnated with philosophy and depth of reflection, is his *Reflections on the French Revolution*. But this work is so generally known, at least in its most striking passages, that we may satisfy ourselves with a single short extract :—

You will observe, that, from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Rights, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties as an *entailed inheritance*, derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity ; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown ; an inheritable peerage ; and an House of Commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties from a long line of ancestors.

This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection ; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free : but it secures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims are locked fast as in a sort of fami

settlement: grasped as in a kind of mortmain for ever. By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of providence, are handed down, to us and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain we are never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this manner, and on these principles, to our forefathers, we are guided, not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.

Through the same plan of a conformity to nature in our artificial institutions, and by calling in the aid of her unerring and powerful instincts to fortify the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reason, we have derived several other, and these no small, benefits, from considering our liberties in the light of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity. This idea of a liberal

descent inspires us with a sense of habitual native dignity, which prevents that upstart insolence almost inevitably adhering to-and disgracing those who are the first acquirers of any distinction. By this means our liberty becomes a noble freedom. It carries an imposing and majestic aspect. It has a pedigree and illustrating ancestors. It has its bearings and its ensigns armorial. It has its gallery of portraits; its monumental inscriptions; its records, evidences, and titles. We procure reverence to our civil institutions on the principle upon which nature teaches us to revere individual men; on account of their age, and on account of those from whom they are descended. All your sophisters cannot produce any thing better adapted to preserve a rational and manly freedom than the course that we have pursued, who have chosen our nature rather than our speculations, our breasts rather than our inventions, for the great conservatories and magazines of our rights and privileges.

The Reflections appeared in 1790. We shall not give any extract from the Letter to a Noble Lord on the attacks made upon him in the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, which, as it is one of the most eloquent and spirited, is also perhaps the most generally known of all Burke's writings. The following passage from another Letter, written in 1796 (the year before), to William Elliot, Esq., on a speech made in the House of Lords by the Duke of Norfolk, will probably be less familiar to many of our readers:—

I wished to warn the people against the greatest of all evils,—a blind and furious spirit of innovation, under the name of reform. I was indeed well aware that power rarely reforms itself. So it is undoubtedly when all is quiet about it. But I was in hopes that provident fear might prevent fruitless penitence. I trusted that danger might produce at least circumspection; I flattered myself, in a moment like this, that nothing would be

added to make authority top-heavy; that the very moment of an earthquake would not be the time chosen for adding a story to our houses. I hoped to see the surest of all reforms, perhaps the only sure reform, the ceasing to do ill. In the meantime, I wished to the people the wisdom of knowing how to tolerate a condition which none of their efforts can render much more than tolerable. It was a condition, however, in which every thing was to be found that could enable them to live to nature, and, if so they pleased, to live to virtue and to honour.

I do not repent that I thought better of those to whom I wished well than they will suffer me long to think that they deserved. Far from repenting, I would to God that new faculties had been called up in me, in favour not of this or that man, or this or that system, but of the general vital principle, that whilst in its vigour produced the state of things transmitted to us from our fathers; but which, through the joint operations of the abuses of authority and liberty, may perish in our hands. I am not of opinion that the race of men, and the commonwealths they create, like the bodies of individuals, grow effete and languid and bloodless, and ossify, by the necessities of their own conformation and the fatal operation of longevity and time. These analogies between bodies natural and politic, though they may sometimes illustrate arguments, furnish no argument of themselves. They are but too often used, under the colour of a specious philosophy, to find apologies for the despair of laziness and pusillanimity, and to excuse the want of all manly efforts when the exigences of our country call for them most loudly.

How often has public calamity been arrested on the very brink of ruin by the seasonable energy of a single man! Have we no such man amongst us? I am as sure as I am of my being that one vigorous mind, without office, without situation, without public functions of any kind (at a time when the want of such a thing is felt, as I am sure it is), I say, one such man, confiding in the aid of God, and full of just reliance in his own fortitude,

vigour, enterprise, and perseverance, would first draw to him some few like himself, and then that multitudes, hardly thought to be in existence, would appear, and troop about him.

If I saw this auspicious beginning, baffled and frustrated as I am, yet, on the very verge of a timely grave, abandoned abroad and desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counselor, and my guide (you know in part what I have lost, and would to God I could clear myself of all neglect and fault in that loss), yet thus, even thus, I would rake up the fire under all the ashes that oppress it. I am no longer patient of the public eye; nor am I of force to win my way, and to jostle and elbow in a crowd. But, even in solitude, something may be done for society. The meditations of the closet have affected senates with a subtle frenzy, and inflamed armies with the brands of the furies. The cure might come from the same source with the distemper. I would add my part to those who would animate the people (whose hearts are yet right) to new exertions in the old cause.

Novelty is not the only source of zeal. Why should not a Maccabeus and his brethren arise to assert the honour of the ancient laws, and to defend the temple of their forefathers, with as ardent a spirit as can inspire any innovator to destroy the monuments of the piety and the glory of ancient ages? It is not a hazarded assertion, it is a great truth, that, when once things are gone out of their ordinary course, it is by acts out of the ordinary course they can alone be re-established. Republican spirit can only be combated by a spirit of the same nature: of the same nature, but informed with another principle, and pointed to another end. I would persuade a resistance both to the corruption and to the reformation that prevails. It will not be the weaker, but much the stronger, for combating both together. A victory over real corruptions would enable us to baffle the spurious and pretended reformations. I would not wish to excite, or even to tolerate, that kind of evil which invokes the powers of hell to rectify the disorders of the earth. No!

I would add my voice, with better, and, I trust, more potent charms, to draw down justice, and wisdom, and fortitude from heaven, for the correction of human vice, and the recalling of human error from the devious ways into which it has been betrayed. I would wish to call the impulses of individuals at once to the aid and to the controul of authority. By this, which I call the true republican spirit, paradoxical as it may appear, monarchies alone can be rescued from the imbecility of courts and the madness of the crowd. This republican spirit would not suffer men in high place to bring ruin on their country and on themselves. It would reform, not by destroying, but by saving the great, the rich, and the powerful. Such a republican spirit we, perhaps fondly, conceive to have animated the distinguished heroes and patriots of old, who knew no mode of policy but religion and virtue. These they would have paramount to all constitutions; they would not suffer monarchs, or senates, or popular assemblies, under pretences of dignity, or authority, or freedom, to shake off those moral riders which reason has appointed to govern every sort of rude power. These, in appearance loading them by their weight, do by that pressure augment their essential force. The momentum is increased by the extraneous weight. It is true in moral, as it is in mechanical science. It is true, not only in the draught but in the race. These riders of the great, in effect, hold the reins which guide them in their course, and wear the spur that stimulates them to the goals of honour and of safety. The great must submit to the dominion of prudence and of virtue, or none will long submit to the dominion of the great.

From the second of the Letters on a Regicide Peace, or, to transcribe the full title, "Letters addressed to a Member of the present Parliament on the Proposals for Peace with the Regicide Directory of France,"* published

* There are four letters in all; of which the two first appeared in 1796 (a surreptitious edition being also brought out at the same time by Owen, a bookseller of Piccadilly),

in 1796, we give as our last extract the following remarkable observations on the conduct of the war :—

It is a dreadful truth, but it is a truth that cannot be concealed ; in ability, in dexterity, in the distinctness of their views, the Jacobins are our superiors. They saw the thing right from the very beginning. Whatever were the first motives to the war among politicians, they saw that in its spirit, and for its objects, it was a *civil war* ; and as such they pursued it. It is a war between the partisans of the ancient, civil, moral, and political order of Europe, against a sect of fanatical and ambitious atheists, which means to change them all. It is not France extending a foreign empire over other nations ; it is a sect aiming at universal empire, and beginning with the conquest of France. The leaders of that sect secured the *centre of Europe* ; and, that assured, they knew that, whatever might be the event of battles and sieges, their *cause* was victorious. Whether its territory had a little more or a little less peeled from its surface, or whether an island or two was detached from its commerce, to them was of little moment. The conquest of France was a glorious acquisition. That once well laid as a basis of empire, opportunities never could be wanting to regain or to replace what had been lost, and dreadfully to avenge themselves on the faction of their adversaries.

They saw it was a *civil war*. It was their business to persuade their adversaries that it ought to be a *foreign war*. The Jacobins everywhere set up a cry against the new crusade ; and they intrigued with effect in the cabinet, in the field, and in every private society in Europe. Their task was not difficult. The condition of princes, and sometimes of first ministers too, is to be pitied. The creatures of the desk, and the creatures of favour, had no

the third was passing through the press when Burke died, in July, 1797, and the fourth, which is unfinished, and had been written, so far as it goes, before the three others, after his death.

relish for the principles of the manifestoes.* They promised no governments, no regiments, no revenues from whence emoluments might arise by perquisite or by grant. In truth, the tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species. There is no trade so vile and mechanical as government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit. They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal, and prospective view of the interests of states passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. The calculators compute them out of their senses. The jesters and buffoons shame them out of everything grand and elevated. Littleness in object and in means to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit but that which they can handle—which they can measure with a two-foot rule—which they can tell upon ten fingers.

Without the principles of the Jacobins, perhaps without any principles at all, they played the game of that faction. . . . They aimed, or pretended to aim, at *defending* themselves against a danger from which there can be no security in any *defensive* plan. . . . This error obliged them, even in their offensive operations, to adopt a plan of war, against the success of which there was something little short of mathematical demonstration. They refused to take any step which might strike at the heart of affairs. They seemed unwilling to wound the enemy in any vital part. They acted through the whole as if they really wished the conservation of the Jacobin power, as what might be more favourable than the lawful government to the attainment of the petty objects they looked for. They always kept on the circumference; and, the wider and remoter the circle was, the more eagerly they chose it as their sphere of action in this centrifugal war. The plan they pursued in its nature demanded great length of time. In its execution, they who went the nearest way to work were obliged to

* Of the Emperor and the King of Prussia, published in August, 1792.

cover an incredible extent of country. It left to the enemy every means of destroying this extended line of weakness. Ill success in any part was sure to defeat the effect of the whole. This is true of Austria. It is still more true of England. On this false plan even good fortune, by further weakening the victor, put him but the further off from his object.

As long as there was any appearance of success, the spirit of aggrandizement, and consequently the spirit of mutual jealousy, seized upon all the coalesced powers. Some sought an accession of territory at the expense of France, some at the expense of each other, some at the expense of third parties; and, when the vicissitude of disaster took its turn, they found common distress a treacherous bond of faith and friendship.

The greatest skill, conducting the greatest military apparatus, has been employed; but it has been worse than uselessly employed, through the false policy of the war. The operations of the field suffered by the errors of the cabinet. If the same spirit continues when peace is made, the peace will fix and perpetuate all the errors of the war.

Had we carried on the war on the side of France which looks towards the Channel or the Atlantic, we should have attacked our enemy on his weak or unarmed side. We should not have to reckon on the loss of a man who did not fall in battle. We should have an ally in the heart of the country, who, to one hundred thousand, would at one time have added eighty thousand men at the least, and all animated by principle, by enthusiasm, and by vengeance; motives which secured them to the cause in a very different manner from some of those allies whom we subsidized with millions. This ally (or rather this principal in the war), by the confession of the regicide himself, was more formidable to him than all his other foes united. Warring there, we should have led our arms to the capital of wrong. Defeated, we could not fail (proper precautions taken) of a sure retreat. Stationary, and only supporting the royalists, an impenetrable barrier, an impregnable rampart, would have been formed

between the enemy and his naval power. We are probably the only nation who have declined to act against an enemy, when it might have been done, in his own country; and who, having an armed, a powerful, and a long-victorious ally in that country, declined all effectual co-operation, and suffered him to perish for want of support. On the plan of a war in France, every advantage that our allies might obtain would be doubtful in its effect. Disasters on the one side might have a fair chance of being compensated by victories on the other. Had we brought the main of our force to bear upon that quarter, all the operations of the British and imperial crowns would have been combined. The war would have had system, correspondence, and a certain connection. But, as the war has been pursued, the operations of the two crowns have not the smallest degree of mutual bearing or relation.*

METAPHYSICAL AND ETHICAL WRITERS.

The most remarkable metaphysical and speculative works which had appeared in England since Locke's Essay were, Dr. Samuel Clarke's Sermons on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, 1705, in which he expounded his famous *à priori* argument for the existence of a God; Berkeley's Theory of Vision, 1709; his Principles of Human Knowledge, 1710, in which he announced his argument against the existence of matter; his Dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, 1713; his Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher, 1732; his Analyst, 1734; the Earl of Shaftesbury's Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times, first pub-

* These prophetic views are very similar to those that were urged twelve years later in a memorable article in the Edinburgh Review, known to be by a great living orator. (See No. XXV., Don Cevallos on the French Usurpation of
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lished in the form in which we now have them in 1713, after the author's death; Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*, 1714; Dr. Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 1725; Andrew Baxter's *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, 1730; Bishop Butler's *Sermons* preached at the Rolls Chapel, 1726; and his *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, 1736. David Hume, who was born in 1711, and died in 1776, and who has gained the highest place in two very distinct fields of intellectual and literary enterprise, commenced his literary life by the publication of his *Treatise on Human Nature*, in 1739. The work, which, as he has himself stated, was projected before he left college, and written and published not long after, fell, to use his own words, "dead-born from the press;" nor did the speculations it contained attract much more attention when republished ten years after in another form under the title of *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*; but they eventually proved perhaps more exciting and productive, at least for a time, both in this and in other countries, than any other metaphysical views that had been promulgated in modern times. Hume's *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* appeared in 1752, his *Natural History of Religion* in 1755; and with the latter publication he may be regarded as having concluded the exposition of his sceptical philosophy. Among the most distinguished writers on mind and morals that appeared after Hume within the first quarter of a century of the reign of George III. may be mentioned Hartley, whose *Observations on Man*, in which he unfolded his

pothesis of the association of ideas, were published in 1749 ; Lord Kames (Home), whose *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* were published in 1752 ; Adam Smith, whose *Theory of Moral Sentiments* was published in 1759 ; Reid, whose *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, was published in 1764 ; Abraham Tucker (Edward Search, Esq.), the first part of whose *Light of Nature Pursued* was published in 1768, the second in 1778, after the author's death ; and Priestley, whose new edition of Hartley's work, with an *Introductory Dissertation*, was published in 1775 ; his *Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry*, the same year ; and his *Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity*, in 1777. We may add to the list Campbell's very able *Dissertation on Miracles*, in answer to Hume, which appeared in 1763 ; and Beattie's *Essay on Truth*, noticed in a former page, which appeared in 1770, and was also, as everybody knows, an attack upon the philosophy of the great sceptic.

HISTORICAL WRITERS :—HUME.—ROBERTSON.—GIBBON.

In the latter part of his literary career Hume struck into altogether another line, and the subtle and daring metaphysician suddenly came before the world in the new character of an historian. He appears, indeed, to have nearly abandoned metaphysics very soon after the publication of his *Philosophical Essays*. In a letter to his friend Sir Gilbert Elliott, which, though without date, seems, from its contents, according to Mr. Stewart, to have been written about 1750 or 1751, he says, "I am sorry that our correspondence should lead us into these abstract speculations. I have thought, and read,

and 'composed very little on such questions of late. Morals, politics, and literature have employed all my time.'"* The first volume of his *History of Great Britain*, containing the Reigns of James I. and Charles I., was published, in quarto, at Edinburgh, in 1754; the second, containing the Commonwealth and the Reigns of Charles II. and James II., at London, in 1757.† According to his own account the former was received with "one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation;" and after the first ebullitions of the fury of his assailants were over, he adds, "what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion: Mr. Millar told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it." He was so bitterly disappointed, that, he tells us, had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, he had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, changed his name, and never more returned to his native country. However, after a little time, in the impracticability of executing this scheme of expatriation, he resolved to pick up courage and persevere, the more especially as his second volume was considerably advanced. That, he informs us, "happened to give less displeasure

* *Dissertation on the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical, and Political Philosophy*, prefixed to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, p. 206, *note* 3. But we do not understand how Mr. Stewart infers from this letter that Hume had abandoned all his metaphysical researches *long before* the publication of his *Essays*. His *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding*, which are those of which Mr. Stewart is speaking, were first published in 1749.

† The common accounts say 1756; but the copy before us, "printed for A. Millar, opposite Catharine Street, in the Strand," is dated 1757

to the Whigs, and was better received: it not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother." The work, indeed, seems to have now rapidly attained extraordinary popularity. Two more volumes, comprehending the reigns of the princes of the House of Tudor, appeared in 1759; and the remaining two, completing the History, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the accession of Henry VII., in 1762. And several new editions of all the volumes were called for in rapid succession.* Hume makes as much an epoch in our historical as he does in our philosophical literature. His originality in the one department is as great as in the other; and the influence he has exerted upon those who have followed him in the same path has been equally extensive and powerful in both cases. His History, notwithstanding some defects which the progress of time and of knowledge is every

* In a newspaper of 1764 (The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, for Wednesday, May 9), we find, besides the advertisement of a new edition of the History of the House of Tudor, in 2 vols. small paper, 4to., price 1*l.* 5*s.*, the following announcement, which is curious both as an evidence of the popularity of Hume's work, and as showing that a mode of publication extensively adopted in our own day is no novelty:—"This day is published, printed on a new type and good paper, the seventh volume, in octavo, price 5*s.* in boards, of the Complete History of England, from Julius Cæsar to the Revolution. With Additions and Corrections. And to the last volume will be added a full and complete Index. By DAVID HUME, Esq. * * * The Proprietor, at the desire of many who wish to be possessed of this valuable and esteemed History, is induced to this Monthly Publication, which will not exceed Eight volumes; a volume of which shall be punctually published every Month, for the benefit of those who do not choose to purchase them all at once. Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand; and S. Bladon, in Paternoster Row; and to be had of all the Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland."

year making more considerable, or at least enabling us better to perceive, and some others which probably would have been much the same at whatever time the work had been written, has still merits of so high a kind as a literary performance that it must ever retain its place among our few classical works in this department, of which it is as yet perhaps the greatest. In narrative clearness, grace, and spirit, at least, it is not excelled, scarcely equalled, by anything else in the language; and it has besides the high charm, indispensable to every work that is to endure, of being impressed all over with the peculiar character of the author's own mind, interesting us even in its most prejudiced and objectionable passages (perhaps still more, indeed, in some of these than elsewhere) by his tolerant candour and gentleness of nature, his charity for all the milder vices, his unaffected indifference to many of the common objects of human passion, and his contempt for their pursuers, never waxing bitter or morose, and often impregnating his style and manner with a vein of the quietest but yet truest and richest humour. One effect which we may probably ascribe in great part to the example of Hume was the attention that immediately began to be turned to historic composition in a higher spirit than had heretofore been felt among us, and that ere long added to the possessions of the language in that department the celebrated performances of Robertson and Gibbon. Robertson's History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI. was published at London in 1759; his History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V., in 1769; and his History of America, in 1776. Robertson's style of narration, lucid, equable, and sob

embellished, took the popular ear and taste from the first. A part of the cause of this favourable reception is silyly enough indicated by Hume, in a letter which he wrote to Robertson himself on the publication of the *History of Scotland* :—"The great success of your book, besides its real merit, is forwarded by its prudence, and by the deference paid to established opinions. It gains also by its being your first performance, and by its surprising the public, who are not upon their guard against it. By reason of these two circumstances justice is more readily done to its merit, which, however, is really so great, that I believe there is scarce another instance of a first performance being so near perfection."* The applause, indeed, was loud and universal, from Horace Walpole to Lord Lyttelton, from Lord Mansfield to David Garrick.† Nor did it fail to be renewed in equal measure on the appearance both of his *History of Charles V.* and of his *History of America*. But, although in his own day he probably bore away the palm from Hume in the estimation of the majority, the finest judgments even then discerned, with Gibbon, that there was something higher in "the careless inimitable graces" of the latter than in his rival's more elaborate regularity, flowing and perspicuous as it usually is; and, as always happens, time has brought the general opinion into accordance with this feeling of the wiser few. The first volume of Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* appeared in 1776, a few months before

* *Account of the Life and Writings of Robertson*, by Dugald Stewart.

† "Lord Lyttelton," says Hume, in another letter, "seems to think that since the time of St. Paul there scarce has been a better writer than Dr. Robertson." Digitized by Google

the death of Hume, and about a year before the publication of Robertson's *America*; the second and third followed in 1781; the three additional volumes, which completed the work, not till 1788. Of the first volume, the author tells us, "the first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand;" and a scarcely diminished interest followed the great undertaking to its close, notwithstanding the fear which he expresses in the preface to his concluding volumes that "six ample quartos must have tired, and may have exhausted, the indulgence of the public." A performance at once of such extent, and of so sustained a brilliancy throughout, perhaps does not exist in ancient or modern historical literature: but it is a hard metallic brilliancy, which even the extraordinary interest of the subject and the unflagging animation of the writer, with the great skill he shows in the disposition of his materials, do not prevent from becoming sometimes fatiguing and oppressive. Still the splendour, artificial as it is, is very imposing; it does not warm, as well as illuminate, like the light of the sun, but it has at least the effect of a theatrical blaze of lamps and cressets; while it is supported everywhere by a profusion of real erudition such as would make the dullest style and manner interesting. It is remarkable, however, that, in regard to mere language, no one of these three celebrated historical writers, the most eminent we have yet to boast of, at least among those that have stood the test of time, can be recommended as a model. No one of the three, in fact, was of English birth and education. Gibbon's style is very impure, abounding in Gallicisms; Hume's, especially in the first edition of his *History*,

with all its natural elegance, almost as much infested with Scotticisms; and, if Robertson's be less incorrect in that respect, it is so unidiomatic as to furnish a still less adequate exemplification of genuine English eloquence. Robertson died at the age of seventy-one, in 1793; Gibbon, in 1794, at the age of fifty-seven.

Many other historical works, some of them very ably executed, and forming valuable additions to our literature, also appeared about this date, the most remarkable of which are, Lord Lyttelton's *History of the Life of King Henry II.* (1764-7), a prolix and ill-arranged but elaborate and sensible performance, founded throughout on original authorities, and, from the detailed and painstaking investigations it contains of many fundamental points, still forming perhaps the best introduction we possess to the study of the English constitution; Sir David Dalrymple lord Hailes's admirable *Annals of Scotland from the accession of Malcolm Canmore to the accession of the House of Stuart* (1776-9); Sir John Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland from the Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II. until the sea-battle off La Hogue* (1771-3), to which a third volume was afterwards added carrying down the narrative to the capture of the French and Spanish fleets at Vigo, a publication the importance of which consists in the original papers it contains, procured from the French Foreign Office and from King William's private cabinet at Kensington; James Macpherson's *History of Great Britain from the Restoration to the Accession of the House of Hanover, with Original Papers* (1775); Gilbert Stuart's *Historical Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the British Constitution*

(1767); his *View of Society in Europe in its Progress from Rudeness to Refinement*; or, *Inquiries concerning the History of Laws, Government, and Manners* (1777); his *History of the Establishment of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland* (1780): and his *History of Scotland from the Establishment of the Reformation till the Death of Queen Mary* (1782): all displaying both research and acuteness, but the two last mentioned deformed by the author's violent personal animosity against Robertson, for the purpose of confuting certain of whose statements and views they were mainly written; Whitaker's *History of Manchester* (1771-5), which is in truth a general investigation of the Celtic and Roman antiquities of Britain, conducted, however, with more learning and ingenuity than sound judgment; Warner's *History of Ireland* (1763-7); Leland's *History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II.* (1778), a well-written general sketch, by the translator of Demosthenes and Æschines, and the author of *The Life of Philip of Macedon*, published in 1758: Henry's *History of Great Britain*, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the Death of Henry VIII. (1771-74-77-81-85, a sixth volume having been published in 1798, after the author's death, under the superintendence of Malcolm Laing, Esq.), a work valuable for the numerous facts it contains illustrative of manners and the state of society, which are not to be found in any of our previous general historians, but chiefly meritorious as having been our first English history compiled upon that plan; Granger's curious *Biographical History of England* (1769-75); Dr. Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), and his *History of the Progress and the Termination of the Ro-*

man Republic (1783), both very able works, the produce of independent thought as well as of accurate scholarship ; Watson's History of Philip II. of Spain (1776), designed as a sequel to Robertson's Charles V., the continuation of which to the death of Philip III., begun by Watson, was completed and published in 1783, after his death, by the late Dr. William Thomson ; Orme's accurate and perspicuous History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745 (1763-78) ; Holwell's Interesting Historical Events relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the empire of Hindostan (1765-67-71) ; Anderson's Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce (1764) ; Tytler lord Woodhouselee's Plan and Outlines of a Course of Lectures on Universal History (1783). To these titles may be added that of Home lord Kames's Sketches of the History of Man (1773), which, however, although it presents a highly curious collection of arranged facts, or what the author believed to be such, is in the main rather disquisitional and theoretic than historical in the proper sense.

**POLITICAL ECONOMY.—THEOLOGY, CRITICISM, AND
BELLES LETTRES.**

Besides his metaphysical and historical works, upon which his fame principally rests, the penetrating and original genius of Hume also distinguished itself in another field, that of economical speculation, which had for more than a century before his time greatly engaged the attention of inquirers in this country. There are many ingenious views upon this subject scattered up and down in his Political Discourses, and his Moral and

Political Essays. Other contributions, not without value, to the science of political economy, for which we are indebted to the middle of the last century, are the Rev. R. Wallace's *Essay on the Numbers of Mankind*, published at Edinburgh in 1753: and Sir James Steuart's *Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, which appeared in 1767. But these and all other preceding works on the subject have been thrown into the shade by Adam Smith's celebrated *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, which, after having been long expected, was at last given to the world in the beginning of the year 1776. It is interesting to learn that this crowning performance of his friend was read by Hume, who died before the close of the year in which it was published; a letter of his to Smith is preserved, in which, after congratulating him warmly on having acquitted himself so as to relieve the anxiety and fulfil the hopes of his friends, he ends by saying, "If you were here at my fireside, I should dispute some of your principles. . . . But these, and a hundred other points, are fit only to be discussed in conversation. I hope it will be soon, for I am in a very bad state of health, and cannot afford a long delay." Smith survived till July, 1790.

A few other names, more or less distinguished in the literature of this time, we must content ourselves with merely mentioning:—in theology, Warburton, Horsley, Jortin, Madan, Gerard, Blair, Geddes, Lardner, Priestley; in critical and grammatical disquisition, Harris, Monboddo, Kames, Blair, Jones; in antiquarian research, Walpole, Hawkins, Burney, Chandler, Barrington, Steevens, Pegge, Farmer, Vallancey, Grose, Gough; in the department of the belles lettres and miscellan-

speculation, Chesterfield, Hawkesworth, Brown, Jenyns, Bryant, Hurd, Melmoth, Potter, Francklin, &c.

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE.

We brought down our sketch of the progress of the mathematical and physical sciences in our last volume to the death of Flamsteed in 1719. The successor of Flamsteed, as astronomer royal, was Edmund Halley, who was then in his sixty-fourth year, and who held the appointment till his death in 1742, at the age of eighty-six. "Among the Englishmen of his day," says the writer of his life in the Penny Cyclopædia, "Halley stands second only to Newton, and probably for many years after the publication of the Principia he was the only one who both could and would rightly appreciate the character and coming utility of that memorable work. His own attention was too much divided to permit of his being the mathematician which he might have been; but nevertheless his papers on pure mathematics show a genius of the same order of power, though of much less fertility, with that of John Bernouilli." * Besides numerous papers in the Philosophical Transactions, Halley is the author of a Catalogue of the Southern Stars (*Catalogus Stellarum Australium, sive Supplementum Catalogi Tychonici*) published in 1679, being the result of his observations made at St. Helena, where he had resided the two preceding years; and of editions of the treatise of Apollonius De Rationis Sectione (from the Arabic), and of the same ancient geometer's Conic Sections (partly from the Arabic), the former of which was published at Oxford in 1706, the latter in 1710. Halley did not himself understand

* Penny Cyclopædia, xii. 21.

Arabic, but he was able both to restore what was lost in these works and in many cases to suggest the true meaning and emendation of the text where it was corrupted, merely by his geometrical ingenuity and profound knowledge of their subjects. Besides other astronomical labours, Halley is famous for having been the first person to predict the return of a comet, that known by his name, which he first saw at Paris in December 1680, and which actually reappeared, as he had calculated that it would, in 1758 and 1835. He also suggested the observation of the transit of Venus, with the view of determining the sun's parallax, which was accomplished at St. Helena, by Dr. Maskelyne, in 1761. Out of the province of astronomy he contributed to the progress of science by his construction of the first tables of mortality (from observations made at Breslau), by his improvements in the diving-bell, and by his speculations on the variation of the compass, the theory of the trade winds, and other subjects.

The third astronomer royal was James Bradley—"the first, perhaps, of all astronomers," as he is called by the writer of his life in the Penny Cyclopædia, "in the union of theoretical sagacity with practical excellence." Bradley, who was born in 1693, had already in 1728 made his great discovery of the aberration of light, or the apparent alteration in the place of a star arising in part from the motion of light, in part from the change of position in the spectator occasioned by the motion of the earth; "the greatest discovery," says the writer just quoted, "of a man who has, more than any other, contributed to render *a single observation* of a star correct enough for the purposes of astronomy," and "the first

positively direct and unanswerable proof of the earth's motion." * Bradley, whom Newton had declared the best astronomer in Europe, held the office of astronomer royal from 1742 till his death in 1762. Besides an immense mass of observations of unprecedented accuracy (which have been published by the University of Oxford in two volumes, 1798-1805), he made in 1747 his second great discovery of the nutation of the earth's axis, that is, of the fact that the curve in which the pole of the equator moves round the pole of the ecliptic is not that of a plain but of a waving or tremulous circle, somewhat like the rim of a milled coin. One of the subjects that occupied the attention of this distinguished astronomer was the introduction of the new style, which was effected by act of parliament in 1751. "Bradley," says his biographer in the Penny Cyclopædia, "appears to have had some share in drawing up the necessary tables, as well as in aiding Lord Macclesfield, his early friend, and the seconder of the measure in the House of Lords, and Mr. Pelham, then minister, with his advice on the subject. But this procured him some unpopularity, for the common people of all ranks imagined that the alteration was equivalent to robbing them of eleven days of their natural lives, and called Bradley's subsequent illness and decline a judgment of heaven." "This," adds the learned writer, "was, as far as we know, the last expiring manifestation of a belief in the wickedness of altering the time of religious anniversaries, which had disturbed the world more or less, and at different periods, for fourteen hundred years.† But, if the people believed that the change of

* Penny Cyclopædia, v. 320.

† Ibid., v. 321.

style had actually shortened their lives, they had more serious cause for alarm than the zealots of orthodoxy in former times, who made themselves unhappy about the notion of merely celebrating Easter on the wrong day.

In the earlier part of the eighteenth century, we ought not to omit to mention, was invented the ingenious and valuable instrument called Hadley's Quadrant (since improved into a sextant, and still more recently into an entire circle), either by John Hadley, who was a fellow of the Royal Society, and who gave an account of it in the Philosophical Transactions for 1731, or by Thomas Godfrey, a glazier in Philadelphia, who is generally believed to have been in possession of it a year before the date of Hadley's communication. But it appears that a similar instrument had been described to Dr. Halley by Newton, some time before his death in 1727. And this age is also marked in the history of optics and astronomical observation by the important correction of the Newtonian views as to the dispersion of refracted light, of which the honour belongs to John Dollond, and by the invention of the Achromatic Telescope, with which that sagacious and philosophical experimentalist followed up his discovery. Dollond's account of his "Experiments concerning the different refrangibility of light" appeared in the Philosophical Transactions in 1758; and his achromatic object-glass was contrived the same year.

Of a few other distinguished British mathematicians belonging to the middle portion of the last century the most eminent was Colin Maclaurin, the successor of James Gregory in the mathematical chair at Edinburgh, who was born in 1698, and died in 1746. Maclaurin

principal works are his *Geometria Organica* (a treatise on curves), published in 1720; his admirable *Treatise on Fluxions*, 1742; and his *Treatise on Algebra*, 1748. Another very able performance printed after his death is his *Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries*, which also appeared at London in 1748. All Maclaurin's works are distinguished by profoundness and solidity united with elegance, and often by originality in the method of exposition, or novelty in the application of principles. His countryman and contemporary, Dr. Robert Simpson, professor of mathematics at Glasgow (b. 1687, d. 1768), was also a most learned and able geometrician: he is the author of a restoration of the "*Loci*" of Apollonius, and of an English translation of Euclid, which continued down to our own day in common use as an elementary book both in Scotland and England. Along with these may be mentioned James Stirling, the author of a Latin treatise published in 1717, on what are called lines of the third order, and a treatise on fluxions, entitled *Methodus Differentialis*, 1730. William Emerson, a mathematician and mechanist of great talent, whose death did not take place till 1782, when he had reached his eighty-first year, is the author of a series of works, on fluxions, trigonometry, mechanics, navigation, algebra, optics, astronomy, geography, dialing, &c. His manner of writing is singularly uncouth; but his works often exhibit much scientific elegance, as well as considerable invention. Another author of a remarkable series of mathematical works, of this date, is the self-taught genius, Thomas Simpson, who was born at Market Bosworth, in the humblest rank of life, in 1710, worked at his trade of

a weaver till he was seven-and-twenty, and then suddenly came forth as one of the most acute and well-furnished mathematical writers of the day. A Treatise on Fluxions, another on the Nature and Laws of Chance, a quarto volume of Essays on subjects in speculative and mixed mathematics, a work on the doctrine of Annuities and Reversion, a second volume of Mathematical Dissertations, a treatise on Algebra, another on Elementary Geometry, another on Trigonometry, plane and spherical, a new work on the doctrine and application of Fluxions, a volume of Exercises for young proficients in Mathematics, and a volume of Miscellaneous Tracts, were all produced by Simpson in the twenty years between 1737 and 1757. And he also furnished several papers to the Philosophical Transactions, and edited for some years the mathematical annual called *The Ladies' Diary*. He died in 1761. In the same year with Simpson was born in Banffshire, in Scotland, James Ferguson, who was the son of a day-labourer, and who taught himself the elements of mechanics and astronomy while employed as a farmer's boy in tending sheep. Ferguson published his first performance, his Dissertation on the Phenomena of the Harvest Moon, in 1747; his Astronomy in 1756; his Lectures on Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Pneumatics, and Optics, in 1760; and two or three other works between that date and his death in 1776. "Ferguson," it has been observed, "has contributed more than perhaps any other man in this country to the extension of physical science among all classes of society, but especially among that largest class whose circumstances preclude them from a regular course of scientific instruction. Perspicuity in the selection and arrangement of his facts,

and in the display of the truths deduced from them, was his characteristic both as a lecturer and a writer.”*

Another department of natural philosophy in which some splendid results were obtained by English experimenters of this era was that of electricity. Francis Hawksbee, who was admitted a fellow of the Royal Society in 1705, published several papers in the *Transactions* between that year and 1711, giving an account of a series of experiments, partly performed with a glass globe, in the course of which he noticed a number of facts connected with electrical attraction and repulsion, and in particular detected for the first time the remarkable phenomenon of the production of light by friction. A few years later the subject was taken up by Stephen Gray, a pensioner of the Charter House, who, with the aid of a very poor apparatus, made out a catalogue, which he published in 1720, of bodies which show electricity on being rubbed, and in 1732 discovered the conducting property inherent in bodies that are not electrical. The two opposite kinds, or exhibitions, of electricity (which he called the vitreous and the resinous) were discovered by Dufay, keeper of the King's Garden at Paris, before 1739; and he also showed that bodies similarly electrified repel, and those dissimilarly electrified attract, each other. The mode of accumulating the electric power by what is called the Leyden phial, or jar, was discovered by Cuneus and Lallemand in 1745. This experiment immediately attracted universal attention: Nollet in France, and Watson in England, in particular, applied themselves to

find out the explanation of it ; and the latter is asserted to have first conceived the hypothesis of the redundancy of the electricity on the one side of the jar and its deficiency on the other. The same view occurred to the celebrated Benjamin Franklin, in America, who expounded it in a series of letters written to his friend Collinson, in London, in the course of the year 1747, in which he described the overcharged side of the jar as in a state of positive, and the undercharged of negative, electricity, and showed how all the known phenomena of electric action were to be accounted for on this hypothesis of only one kind of electric matter, or power, in opposite states. Franklin seems to have known little or nothing of what had been done by his predecessors either in France or England ; of the theories, at least, either of Dufay or Watson, he appears never to have heard. Although not the first in the field, his penetrating and inventive genius immediately raised him to the first place among the cultivators of the new science. He soon improved the Leyden jar into the much more powerful apparatus of the electrical battery. Some of his earliest experiments had taught him the superior efficiency of sharp points both in attracting and giving out the electric matter ; from the year 1749 he had inferred, from a great number of facts which he had observed and collected, the probable identity of electricity and lightning ; and at last, in June, 1752, he established that truth by the decisive experiment of actually drawing down the electric matter from the clouds. This was followed by his invention of lightning-conductors, of which, however, none were erected in England till the year 1762.

The thermometer was invented at Florence soon after the middle of the seventeenth century, and by the assistance of that instrument, as manufactured by Fahrenheit and Réaumur, a considerable number of facts relating to the laws of heat had been gradually collected before the middle of the eighteenth. "The most judicious writer," says Professor Leslie, "that had yet appeared on the subject of heat, was Dr. Martine, of St. Andrew's, who studied medicine on the Continent, and, like the accomplished physicians of that period, cultivated learning and general science. His acute Essays, published in the years 1739 and 1740, not only corrected the different thermometric scales, but enriched philosophy by several well devised and original experiments. Unfortunately the career of this promising genius was very short. Having in the pursuit of his profession accompanied Admiral Vernon in the fatal expedition against Carthagera, he perished by a malignant fever."* Mr. Leslie adds, that if Martine's investigations had been steadily prosecuted, they must have led to interesting results. About the year 1750 Dr. Cullen had his attention accidentally drawn to some facts connected with the curious subject of the production of cold by evaporation; but he did not pursue the inquiry.

In general chemistry the experiments begun by Boyle and Hooke had been followed up by their contemporary Dr. John Mayow, a physician of Oxford, whose tracts, written in Latin, on nitre and other connected subjects, were published in 1674. They announced many new and important facts illustrative of the phenomena of

* Dissertation Fourth, in *Encyc. Brit.*, p. 642.

respiration and combustion. About the beginning of the next century the first general theory of combustion was given to the world by the German chemist Stahl—that which, under the name of the Stahlian or Phlogistic theory (from his imaginary *phlogiston*, or principle of inflammability), continued to be generally received down to the era of Black, Cavendish, and Priestley. Some considerable additions were made to our knowledge of aëriform bodies by Dr. Stephen Hales about a quarter of a century after this. But the most important chemical discoveries of this age are those of the celebrated Dr. Joseph Black, the pupil of Cullen. One was that of the new air discovered by him in the commencement of his career, and announced in his ‘Experiments on Magnesia, Quicklime, and other Alkaline Substances,’ published in 1755. Fixed air, or, as it is now called, carbonic acid, had indeed been long before recognised as something distinct from common air by Van Helmont; but his notice of it appears to have been quite forgotten, when it was again detected by Black, who also first examined it with any degree of care, and ascertained its most remarkable properties. Another was the great discovery of latent heat, which he made a few years later. The most eminent names in the mathematical and physical sciences belonging to the earlier part of the reign of George III. are those of Cavendish (the discoverer of the composition of water), Priestley, Herschel (the discoverer of the planet Uranus), Bliss, who was the fourth, and Maskelyne, who was the fifth Astronomer Royal, Horsley, Vince, Maseres, Charles Hutton, James Hutton (the author of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth), Cullen, Brown (the found-

of the Brunonian System of Medicine), John and William Hunter, the anatomists, &c. Under this head may also be noticed the several government voyages of discovery conducted by Commodore Byron, 1764-1766 (in the course of which he discovered the Duke of York's Island and the Isles of Danger); by Captain Wallis, 1766-1768 (in which he discovered the Island of Otaheite); by Captain Carteret, 1766-1769; by Captain Cook, accompanied by Mr. Green, the astronomer, and Dr. Solander and Mr. (afterwards Sir Joseph) Banks, the naturalist, 1768-1771 (in which the transit of Venus over the sun was observed at Otaheite, 4th June, 1769, and New South Wales was discovered, and New Zealand re-discovered); by Captain Cook, 1772-1775 (in which he discovered New Caledonia); and by Captain Cook, 1776-1780 (in which the great navigator discovered the Sandwich Islands, and lost his life there, at Owhyhee, on the 14th of February, 1779).



END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

SKETCHES OF THE HISTORY
OF
LITERATURE AND LEARNING
IN ENGLAND.

WITH SPECIMENS OF THE PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

By GEO. L. CRAIK, M.A.

SERIES THIRD (IN TWO VOLUMES).

**FROM THE REVOLUTION OF 1688 TO THE
PRESENT DAY.**

VOL. VI.

LONDON:
CHARLES KNIGHT & Co., LUDGATE STREET.

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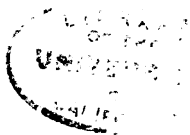
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ERRATUM.

In Vol. III. p. 161, lines 13, 14, *for* “ Dryden has said of his lines,” *read* “ Drayton has said in his lines.”

BOOK VII.—(*continued.*)

THE LATTER PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE death of Samuel Johnson, in the end of the year 1784, makes a pause, or point of distinction, in our literature, hardly less notable than the acknowledgment of the independence of America, the year before, makes in our political history. It was not only the end of a reign, but the end of kingship altogether, in our literary system. For King Samuel has had no successor; nobody since his day, and that of his contemporary Voltaire, has sat on a throne of literature either in England or in France.

Of the literary figures, however, that had previously appeared upon the scene, many continued to be conspicuous for years after this date, some throughout the rest of the century or longer. Burke, the most eminent of them all, survived till 1797; and, having already raised himself to distinction by his publications and speeches in connexion with the American war, won his highest fame in the finishing part of his career by his wonderful oratorical displays on the impeachment of Hastings, and his writings, outblazing everything he had before produced, on the French revolution. Adam Smith did not die till 1790; his countryman, Dr. Robertson, not till 1793; Robertson's illustrious brother historian, Gibbon, not till 1794. Of the poets and or

tivators of light literature, or the belles lettres, who have been already mentioned, Thomas Warton lived till 1790, Ossian Macpherson till 1796, Mason and his friend Horace Walpole till 1797, Joseph Warton till 1800. Other writers, again, our notices of whom will be found in the preceding volume, outlived Johnson by many years. Thus Beattie only died in 1803; Anstey, the author of the New Bath Guide, in 1805; John Home, the author of Douglas, in 1808; Bishop Percy and Richard Cumberland in 1811; Adam Ferguson, the historian of the Roman Republic, in 1816; Richard Brinsley Sheridan the same year; Sir Philip Francis, presumed to be Junius, in 1818; Miss Sophia Lee in 1824; Henry Mackenzie in 1831; Miss Burney (afterwards Madame d'Arblay) not till 1840. These writers, and others whose names might be added, had all produced the works by which they were first made known, most of them those to which they chiefly owe their reputation, before the close of the Johnsonian era.

COWPER.

It is a remarkable fact that, if we were to continue our notices of the poets of the last century in strict chronological order, the first name we should have to mention would be that of a writer, who more properly belongs to what may be called our own day, and to the very latest era of our poetry. Crabbe, whose *Tales of the Hall*, the noblest production of his powerful and original genius, appeared in 1819, and who died so recently as 1832, published his first poem, *The Library*, in 1781; some extracts from it are given in the *Annual Register*

for that year. But Crabbe's literary career is divided into two parts by a chasm, or interval during which he published nothing, of nearly twenty years; and his proper era is the present century.

One remark, however, touching this writer may be made here: his first manner was evidently caught from Churchill more than from any other of his predecessors. And this was also the case with his contemporary Cowper, the poetical writer whose name casts the greatest illustration upon the last twenty years of the eighteenth century. William Cowper, born in 1731, twenty-three years before Crabbe,—we pass over his anonymous contributions to his friend the Rev. Mr. Newton's collection of the *Olney Hymns*, published in 1776,—gave to the world the first volume of his poems, containing those entitled *Table-Talk, The Progress of Error, Truth, Expostulation, Hope, Charity, Conversation, and Retirement*, in 1782; his famous *History of John Gilpin* appeared the following year, without his name, in a publication called '*The Repository*;' his second volume, containing *The Task, Tirocinium*, and some shorter pieces, was published in 1785; his translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in 1791; and his death took place on the 25th of April, 1800. It is recorded that Cowper's first volume attracted little attention: it certainly appears to have excited no perception in the mind or eye of the public of that day that a new and great light had arisen in the poetical firmament. The *Annual Register* for 1781, as we have said, gives extracts from Crabbe's *Library*; a long passage from his next poem, *The Village*, is given in the volume for 1783; the volume for 1785 in like manner treats its readers to a quotation from the *New*

paper, which he had published in that year ; but, except that the anonymous History of John Gilpin is extracted in the volume for 1783 from the Repository, we have nothing of Cowper's till we come to the volume for 1786, which contains two of the minor pieces published in his second volume. Crabbe was probably indebted for the distinction he received in part to his friend and patron Burke, under whose direction the Register was compiled ; but the silence observed in regard to Cowper may be taken as not on that account the less conclusive as to the little or next to no impression his first volume made. Yet surely there were both a force and a freshness of manner in the new aspirant that might have been expected to draw some observation. Nor had there of late been such plenty of good poetry produced in England as to make anything of the kind a drug in the market. But here, in fact, lay the main cause of the public inattention. The age was not poetical. The manufacture of verse was carried on, indeed, upon a considerable scale, by the Hayleys and the Whiteheads and the Pratts and others (spinners of sound and weavers of words not for a moment to be compared in inventive and imaginative faculty, or in faculty of any kind, any more than for the utility of their work, with their contemporaries the Arkwrights and Cartwrights) ; but the production of poetry had gone so much out, that, even in the class most accustomed to judge of these things, few people knew it when they saw it. It has been said that the severe and theological tone of this poetry of Cowper's operated against its immediate popularity ; and that was probably the case too ; but it could only have been so, at any rate to the same extent, in a time at the least as

indifferent to poetry as to religion and morality. For, certainly, since the days of Pope, nothing in the same style had been produced among us to be compared with these poems of Cowper's for animation, vigour, and point, which are among the most admired qualities of that great writer, any more than for the cordiality, earnestness, and fervour which are more peculiarly their own. Smoother versification we had had in great abundance; more pomp and splendour of rhetorical declamation, perhaps, as in Johnson's paraphrases from Juvenal; more warmth and glow of imagination, as in Goldsmith's two poems, if they are to be considered as coming into the competition. But, on the whole, verse of such bone and muscle had proceeded from no recent writer,—not excepting Churchill, whose poetry had little else than its coarse strength to recommend it, and whose hasty and careless workmanship Cowper, while he had to a certain degree been his imitator, had learned, with his artistical feeling, infinitely to surpass. Churchill's vehement invective, with its exaggerations and personalities, made him the most popular poet of his day: Cowper, neglected at first, has taken his place as one of the classics of the language. Each has had his reward—the reward he best deserved, and probably most desired.

As the death of Samuel Johnson closes one era of our literature, so the appearance of Cowper as a poet opens another. Notwithstanding his obligations both to Churchill and Pope, a main characteristic of Cowper's poetry is its originality. Compared with almost any one of his predecessors, he was what we may call a natural poet. He broke through conventional forms and usage in his mode of writing more daringly than any Engli

poet before him had done, at least since the genius of Pope had bound in its spell the phraseology and rhythm of our poetry. His opinions were not more his own than his manner of expressing them. His principles of diction and versification were announced, in part, in the poem with which he introduced himself to the public, his *Table-Talk*, in which, having intimated his contempt for the "creamy smoothness" of modern fashionable verse, where sentiment was so often

sacrificed to sound,

And truth cut short to make a period round,

he exclaims,

Give me the line that ploughs its stately course
Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force ;
That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.

But, although he despised the "tricks" of art, Cowper, like every great poet, was also a great artist ; and, with all its in that day almost unexampled simplicity and naturalness, his style is the very reverse of a slovenly or irregular one. If his verse be not so highly polished as that of Pope,—who, he complains, has

Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by heart,—

it is in its own way nearly as "well disciplined, complete, compact," as he has described Pope's to be. With all his avowed admiration of Churchill, he was far from being what he has called that writer—

Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force.

On the contrary, he has in more than one passage descanted on "the pangs of a poetic birth"—on

the shifts and turns,
The expedients and inventions multiform,

To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms,
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win ;—

and the other labours to be undergone by whoever would attain to excellence in the work of composition. Not, however, that, with all this elaboration, he was a slow writer. Slowness is the consequence of indifference, of a writer not being excited by his subject—not having his heart in his work, but going through it as a mere task ; let him be thoroughly in earnest, fully possessed of his subject and possessed by it, and, though the pains he takes to find apt and effective expression for his thoughts may tax his whole energies like wrestling with a strong man, he will not write slowly. He is in a state of active combustion—consuming away, it may be, but never pausing. Cowper is said to have composed the six thousand verses, or thereby, contained in his first volume, in about three months.

Not creative imagination, nor deep melody, nor even, in general, much of fancy or grace or tenderness, is to be met with in the poetry of Cowper ; but yet it is not without both high and various excellence. Its main charm, and that which is never wanting, is its earnestness. This is a quality which gives it a power over many minds not at all alive to the poetical ; but it is also the source of some of its strongest attractions for those that are. Hence its truth both of landscape-painting, and of the description of character and states of mind ; hence its skilful expression of such emotions and passions as it allows itself to deal with ; hence the force and fervour of its denunciatory eloquence, giving to some passages as fine an inspiration of the moral sublime as is perhaps anywhere to be found in didactic poet

Hence, we may say, even the directness, simplicity, and manliness of Cowper's diction—all that is best in the form, as well as in the spirit, of his verse. It was this quality, or temper of mind, in short, that principally made him an original poet; and, if not the founder of a new school, the pioneer of a new era of English poetry. Instead of repeating the unmeaning conventionalities and faded affectations of his predecessors, it led him to turn to the actual nature within him and around him, and there to learn both the truths he should utter and the words in which he should utter them.

After Cowper had found, or been found out by, his proper audience, the qualities in his poetry that at first had most repelled ordinary readers rather aided its success. In particular, as we have said, its theological tone and spirit made it acceptable in quarters to which poetry of any kind had rarely penetrated, and where it may perhaps be affirmed that it keeps its ground chiefly perforce of this its most prosaic peculiarity; although, at the same time, it is probable that the vigorous verse to which his system of theology and morals has been married by Cowper has not been without effect in diffusing not only a more indulgent toleration but a truer feeling and love for poetry throughout what is called the religious world. Nor is it to be denied that the source of Cowper's own most potent inspiration is his theological creed. The most popular of his poems, and also perhaps the one of greatest pretension, is his *Task*: it abounds in that delineation of domestic and every-day life which interests every body, in descriptions of incidents and natural appearances with which all are familiar, in the expression of sentiments and convictions to which most

hearts readily respond : it is a poem, therefore, in which the greatest number of readers find the greatest number of things to attract and attach them. Besides, both in the form and in the matter, it has less of what is felt to be strange and sometimes repulsive by the generality ; the verse flows, for the most part, smoothly enough, if not with much variety of music ; the diction is, as usual with Cowper, clear, manly, and expressive, but at the same time, from being looser and more diffuse, seldomer harsh or difficult than it is in some of his other compositions ; above all, the doctrinal strain is pitched upon a lower key, and, without any essential point being given up, both morality and religion certainly assume a countenance and voice considerably less rueful and vindictive. But, although *The Task* has much occasional elevation and eloquence, and some sunny passages, it perhaps nowhere rises to the passionate force and vehemence to which Cowper had been carried by a more burning zeal in some of his earlier poems. Take, for instance, the following fine burst in that entitled *Table-Talk* :—

Not only vice disposes and prepares
The mind, that slumbers sweetly in her snares,
To stoop to tyranny's usurped command,
And bend her polished neck beneath his hand
(A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws,
Unchangeably connected with its cause) ;
But Providence himself will intervene
To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.
All are his instruments ; each form of war,
What burns at home, or threatens from afar,
Nature in arms, her elements at strife,
The storms that upset the joys of life,
Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,
And waste it at the bidding of his hand.

He gives the word, and mutiny soon roars
 In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores ;
 The standards of all nations are unfurled ;
 She has one foe, and that one foe the world :
 And, if he doom that people with a frown,
 And mark them with a seal of wrath pressed down,
 Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof ;
 Earth shakes beneath them, and heaven wars above ;
 But nothing scares them from the course they love.
 To the lascivious pipe, and wanton song,
 That charm down fear, they frolic it along,
 With mad rapidity and unconcern,
 Down to the gulf from which is no return.
 They trust in navies, and their navies fail—
 God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail !
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies ;
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ;
 But all they trust in withers, as it must,
 When He commands, in whom they place no trust.
 Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast
 A long despised, but now victorious, host ;
 Tyranny sends the chain, that must abridge
 The noble sweep of all their privilege ;
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock ;
 Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

And, even when it expresses itself in quite other forms,
 and with least of passionate excitement, the fervour
 which inspires these earlier poems occasionally produces
 something more brilliant or more graceful than is any-
 where to be found in *The Task*. How skilfully and
 forcibly executed, for example, is the following moral
 delineation in that called *Truth* :—

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare ;
 Learning is one, and wit, however rare.
 The Frenchman first in literary fame—
 (Mention him, if you please. Voltaire?—The same)

With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied,
 Lived long, wrote much, laughed heartily, and died.
 The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon mots to gall the Christian and the Jew;
 An infidel in health; but what when sick?
 Oh—then a text would touch him at the quick.
 View him at Paris in his last career:
 Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere;
 Exalted on his pedestal of pride,
 And fumed with frankincense on every side,
 He begs their flattery with his latest breath,
 And, smothered in 't at last, is praised to death.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store;
 Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
 Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
 She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
 Has little understanding, and no wit,
 Receives no praise; but, though her lot be such,
 (Toilsome and indigent) she renders much;
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
 And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
 Her title to a treasure in the skies.

O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!
 His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
 He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
 She never heard of half a mile from home;
 He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
 She safe in the simplicity of hers.

Still more happily executed, and in a higher style of art,
 is the following version, so elaborately finished, and yet
 so severely simple, of the meeting of the two disciples
 with their divine Master on the road to Emmaus, in the
 piece entitled *Conversation* :—

It happened on a solemn eventide,
 Soon after He that was our surety died,

Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
 The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
 Sought their own village, busied as they went
 In musings worthy of the great event:
 They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
 Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,
 Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
 A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
 The recollection, like a vein of ore,
 The farther traced, enriched them still the more ;
 They thought him, and they justly thought him, one
 Sent to do more than he appeared to have done ;
 To exalt a people, and to place them high
 Above all else ; and wondered he should die.
 Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
 A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
 And asked them, with a kind, engaging air,
 What their affliction was, and begged a share.
 Informed, he gathered up the broken thread,
 And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
 Explained, illustrated, and searched so well
 The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
 That, reaching home, The night, they said, is near ;
 We must not now be parted,—sojourn here.
 The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
 And, made so welcome at their simple feast,
 He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
 And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord !
 Did not our hearts feel all he deigned to say ?
 Did not they burn within us by the way ?

For one thing, Cowper's poetry, not organ-toned, or informed with any very rich or original music, any more than soaringly imaginative or gorgeously decorated, is of a style that requires the sustaining aid of rhyme: in blank verse it is apt to overflow in pools and shallows. And this is one among other reasons why, after all, some of his short poems, which are nearly all in rhyme, are perhaps what he has done best. His John Gilpin, universally known and universally enjoyed by his country-

men, young and old, educated and uneducated, and perhaps the only English poem of which this can be said, of course at once suggests itself as standing alone in the collection of what he has left us for whimsical conception and vigour of comic humour; but there is a quieter exercise of the same talent, or at least of a kindred sense of the ludicrous and sly power of giving it expression, in others of his shorter pieces. For tenderness and pathos, again, nothing else that he has written, and not much that is elsewhere to be found of the same kind in English poetry, can be compared with his Lines on receiving his Mother's Picture:—

O that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me:
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!'
The meek intelligence of those clear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's gigantic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly as the precept were her own:
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can melt in bliss—

Ah that maternal smile ! it answers—Yes.
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !
 But was it such ?—It was.—Where thou art gone,
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown:
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more !
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wished, I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived ;
 By expectation every day beguiled.
 Dupe of to-morrow even from a child,
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
 I learned at last submission to my lot,
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
 Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor ;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capped,
 'Tis now become a history little known
 That once we called the pastoral house our own.
 Short-lived possession ! but the record fair,
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid ;
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed :
 All this, and, more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks,
 That humour interposed too often makes ;
 All this still legible in memory's page,
 And still to be so to my latest age,

Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Would'st softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
I would not trust my heart ;—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
But no :—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast,
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean crossed)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reached the shore
Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar.*
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost ;
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet O the thought that thou art safe, and he !
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;

But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents passed into the skies.

And now farewell.—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course; yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

This is no doubt, as a whole, Cowper's finest poem, at once springing from the deepest and purest fount of passion, and happy in shaping itself into richer and sweeter music than he has reached in any other. It shows what his real originality, and the natural spirit of art that was in him, might have done under a better training and more favourable circumstances of personal situation, or perhaps in another age. Generally, indeed, it may be said of Cowper, that the more he was left to himself, or trusted to his own taste and feelings, in writing, the better he wrote. In so far as regards the form of composition, the principal charm of what he has done best is a natural elegance, which is most perfect in what he has apparently written with the least labour, or at any rate with the least thought of rules or models. His Letters to his friends, not written for publication at all, but thrown off in the carelessness of his hours of leisure and relaxation, have given him as high a place among the prose classics of his country as he holds among our poets. His least successful performances are his translations of the Iliad and Odyssey, throughout which he was straining to imitate a style not only unlike his own,

but, unfortunately, quite as unlike that of his original—for these versions of the most natural of all poetry, the Homeric, are, strangely enough, attempted in the manner of the most artificial of all poets, Milton.

DARWIN.

Neither, however, did this age of our literature want its artificial poetry. In fact, the expiration or abolition of that manner among us was brought about not more by the example of a fresh and natural style given by Cowper, than by the exhibition of the opposite style, pushed to its extreme, given by his contemporary Darwin. Our great poets of this era cannot be accused of hurrying into print at an immature age. Dr. Erasmus Darwin, born in 1721, after having risen to distinguished reputation as a physician, published the Second Part of his *Botanic Garden*, under the title of ‘*The Loves of the Plants*,’ in 1789: and the First Part, entitled ‘*The Economy of Vegetation*,’ two years after. He died in 1802. The ‘*Botanic Garden*,’ hard, brilliant, sonorous, may be called a poem cast in metal—a sort of Pandemonium palace of rhyme, not unlike that raised long ago in another region,—

where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars, overlaid
With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice, or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven:
The roof was fretted gold.

The poem, however, did not rise exactly “like an exhalation.” “The verse,” writes its author’s sprightly biographer, Miss Anna Seward, “corrected, polished, and modulated with the most sedulous attention; the

notes involving such great diversity of matter relating to natural history ; and the composition going forward in the short recesses of professional attendance, *but chiefly in his chaise, as he travelled from one place to another* ; the ‘ Botanic Garden ’ could not be the work of one, two, or three years ; it was *ten* from its primal lines to its first publication.” If this account may be depended on, the Doctor’s supplies of inspiration must have been vouchsafed to him at the rather penurious rate of little more than a line a day. At least, therefore, it cannot be said of him, as it was said of his more fluent predecessor in both gifts of Apollo, Sir Richard Blackmore, that he wrote “ to the rumbling of his chariot wheels.” The verse, nevertheless, does in another way smack of the travelling-chaise, and of “ the short recesses of professional attendance.” Nothing is done in passion and power ; but all by filing, and scraping, and rubbing, and other painstaking. Every line is as elaborately polished and sharpened as a lancet ; and the most effective paragraphs have the air of a lot of those bright little instruments arranged in rows, with their blades out, for sale. You feel as if so thick an array of points and edges demanded careful handling, and that your fingers are scarcely safe in coming near them. Darwin’s theory of poetry evidently was, that it was all a mechanical affair—only a higher kind of pin-making. His own poetry, however, with all its defects, is far from being merely mechanical. The ‘ Botanic Garden ’ is not a poem which any man of ordinary intelligence could have produced by sheer care and industry, or such faculty of writing as could be acquired by serving an apprenticeship to the trade of poetry. Vicious as it is in manner,

it is even there of an imposing and original character ; and a true poetic fire lives under all its affectations, and often blazes up through them. There is not much, indeed, of pure soul or high imagination in Darwin ; he seldom rises above the visible and material ; but he has at least a poet's eye for the perception of that, and a poet's fancy for its embellishment and exaltation. No writer has surpassed him in the luminous representation of visible objects in verse ; his descriptions have the distinctness of drawings by the pencil, with the advantage of conveying, by their harmonious words, many things that no pencil can paint. His images, though they are for the most part tricks of language rather than the transformations or new embodiments of impassioned thought, have often at least an Ovidian glitter and prettiness, or are striking from their mere ingenuity and novelty—as, for example, when he addresses the stars as “flowers of the sky,” or apostrophizes the glowworm as “Star of the earth, and diamond of the night.” These two instances, indeed, thus brought into juxtaposition, may serve to exemplify the principle upon which he constructs such decorations : it is, we see, an economical principle ; for, in truth, the one of these figures is little more than the other reversed, or inverted. Still both are happy and effective enough conceits—and one of them is applied and carried out so as to make it more than a mere momentary light flashing from the verse. The passage is not without a tone of grandeur and meditative pathos :—

Roll on, ye stars ! exult in youthful prime,
Mark with bright curves the printless steps of time ;

Near and more near your beamy cars approach,
 And lessening orbs on lessening orbs encroach ;—
 Flowers of the Sky ! ye too to age must yield,
 Frail as your silken sisters of the field !
 Star after star from heaven's high arch shall rush,
 Suns sink on suns, and systems systems crush,
 Headlong, extinct, to one dark centre fall,
 And death and night and chaos mingle all !
 —Till o'er the wreck, emerging from the storm,
 Immortal Nature lifts her changeful form,
 Mounts from her funeral pyre on wings of flame,
 And soars and shines, another and the same.

There is also a fine moral inspiration, as well as the usual rhetorical brilliancy, in the following lines :—

Hail, adamantine Steel ! magnetic Lord !
 King of the prow, the ploughshare, and the sword !
 True to the pole, by thee the pilot guides
 His steady helm amid the struggling tides,
 Braves with broad sail the immeasurable sea,
 Cleaves the dark air, and asks no star but thee !

Here, to be sure, we have another variation of the same thought according to which the stars have elsewhere been presented shining on earth as glowworms and blooming in the sky as flowers ; and this may be considered to show some poverty of invention in the poet, or an undue partiality for the stars ; but this last metaphor, making a star of the mysterious loadstone, in the dark night and on the immeasurable sea—a guiding and, as it were, living, though lustreless star—is more uncommon and surprising, and evinces more imagination, than the other figures. Bursts such as these, however, are of rare occurrence in the poem. Its sounding declamation is for the most part addressed rather to the ear than to either the imagination or the fancy. But the mortal disease inherent in Darwin's poetry is, that it is essen-

tially unspiritual. It has no divine soul : it has not even a heart of humanity beating in it. Its very life is galvanic and artificial. Matter only is what it concerns itself about : not to spiritualize the material, which is the proper business and end of poetry, but to materialize the spiritual, is its constant tendency and effort. It believes only in the world of sense ; and even of that it selects for its subject the lowest departments. Not man and his emotions, but animals, vegetables, minerals, mechanical inventions and processes, are what it delights to deal with. But these things are mostly, by doom of nature, incapable of being turned into high poetry. They belong to the domain of the understanding, or the bodily senses and powers, not either to that of the imagination or that of the heart. Dr. Darwin himself probably came to suspect that there were some subjects of which poetry could make nothing, some regions of mental speculation in which she could only make herself ridiculous, when he saw how grotesquely, and at the same time how exactly in many respects, the style and manner of his ' Loves of the Plants ' were reflected in the ' Loves of the Triangles.'

Darwin's poetry is now very little read ; and a few extracts, therefore, selected with the object of exhibiting both what is best and what is most peculiar and characteristic in his manner, may not be uninteresting. The first we shall give is the description of the approach of the Goddess of Botany (Darwin manufactures most of his own deities), with part of her address to the Fire Nymphs, in the first canto of the ' Economy of Vegetation :'—

She comes!—the goddess! through the whispering air,
Bright as the moon, descends her blushing car;
Each circling wheel a wreath of flowers entwines,
And gemmed with flowers the silken harness shines;
The golden bits with flowery studs are decked,
And knots of flowers the crimson reins connect.—
And now on earth the silver axle rings,
And the shell sinks upon its slender springs;
Light from her airy seat the goddess bounds,
And steps celestial press the panted grounds.

Fair Spring advancing calls her feathered choir,
And tunes to softer notes her laughing lyre;
Bids her gay hours on purple pinions move,
And crowns her zephyrs with the shafts of love.
Pleased Gnomes, ascending from their earthy beds,
Play round her graceful footsteps as she treads;
Gay Sylphs attendant beat the fragrant air
On winnowing wings, and waft her golden hair;
Blue Nymphs emerging leave their sparkling streams,
And Fiery Forms alight from orient beams;
Musked in the rose's lap fresh dew they shed,
Or breathe celestial lustres round her head.

First the fine forms her dulcet voice requires,
Which bathe or bask in elemental fires;
From each bright gem of Day's refulgent car,
From the pale sphere of every twinkling star,
From each nice pore of ocean, earth, and air,
With eye of flame the sparkling hosts repair,
Mix their gay hues, in changeful circles play,
Like motes that tenant the meridian ray.—
So the clear lens collects with magic power
The countless glories of the midnight hour;
Stars after stars with quivering lustre fall,
And twinkling glide along the whitened wall.—
Pleased, as they pass, she counts the glittering bands,
And stills their murmur with her waving hands;
Each listening tribe with fond expectance burns,
And now to these, and now to those, she turns.

“Nymphs of primeval fire! your vestal train
Hung with gold tresses o'er the vast inane,
Pierced with your silver shafts the throne of night,
And charmed young Nature's opening eyes with light;

When love divine, with brooding wings unfurled,
 Called from the rude abyss the living world.
 'Let there be light!' proclaimed the Almighty Lord;
 Astonished Chaos heard the potent word;
 Through all his realms the kindling ether runs,
 And the mass starts into a million suns;
 Earths round each sun with quick explosions burst,
 And second planets issue from the first;
 Bend, as they journey with projectile force,
 In bright ellipses their reluctant course;
 Orbs wheel in orbs, round centres centres roll,
 And form, self-balanced, one revolving whole.
 —Onward they move amid their bright abode,
 Space without bound, the bosom of their God!

"Ethereal powers! you chase the shooting stars,
 Or yoke the vollied lightnings to your cars;
 Cling round the aërial bow with prisms bright,
 And pleased untwist the seven-fold threads of light;
 Eve's silken couch with gorgeous tints adorn,
 And fire the arrowy throne of rising morn:
 —Or, plumed with flame, in gay battalions spring,
 To brighter regions borne on broader wing;
 Where lighter gases, circumfused on high,
 Form the vast concave of exterior sky;
 With airy lens the scattered rays assault,
 And bend the twilight round the dusky vault;
 Ride, with broad eye and scintillating hair,
 The rapid fireball through the midnight air;
 Dart from the north on pale electric streams,
 Fringing night's sable robe with transient beams.
 —Or rein the planets in their swift careers,
 Gilding with borrowed light their twinkling spheres;
 Alarm with comet-blaze the sapphire plain,
 The wan stars glimmering through its silver train;
 Gem the bright zodiac and the glowing pole,
 Or give the sun's phlogistic orb to roll."

There is much more in the same strain; indeed, the oration of the goddess runs on to very near the end of the canto, or for above 450 lines more. In its first aspect this singular style of Darwin's is not a little im-

posing, with its sonorous march and glare of decoration ; but its real poverty soon makes itself felt. His far-sought epithets and other novel applications of words are speedily found to be less satisfactory than startling ; not unfrequently the effect is something not very far from ludicrous, and at the best the variety proves to be little more than formal, such as might be produced by mere elaboration or trickery. The above passage is rather a favourable specimen : of the peculiar sort of splendour in which Darwin deals, made up in great part of glittering words and other ingenuities of diction, it has as much as perhaps any other passage in the poem ; and the subject is not so unfavourable as some others that he takes up to that kind of display, nor has it led him into any of his more adventurous eccentricities. The conclusion of this address to the Nymphs of Fire is also very high-wrought :—

“ With crest of gold should sultry Sirius glare,
 And with his kindling tresses scorch the air ;
 With points of flame the shafts of summer arm,
 And burn the beauties he designs to warm ;—
 —So erst, when Jove his oath extorted mourned,
 And clad in glory to the fair returned ;
 While Loves at forked bolts their torches light,
 And resting lightnings gild the car of night ;
 His blazing form the dazzled maid admired,
 Met with fond lips, and in his arms expired ;—
 —Nymphs ! on light pinions lead your bannered hosts
 High o’er the cliffs of Orkney’s gulfy coasts ;
 Leave on your left the red volcanic light
 Which Hecla lifts amid the dusky night ;
 Mark on the right the Dofrine’s snow-capt brow,
 Where whirling Maelstrom roars and foams below ;
 Watch with unmoving eye where Cepheus bends
 His triple crown, his sceptred hand extends ;

Where studs Cassiope with stars unknown
 Her golden chair, and gems her sapphire zone;
 Where with vast convolution Draco holds
 The ecliptic axis in his scaly folds,
 O'er half the skies his neck enormous rears,
 And with immense meanders parts the Bears;
 Onward, the kindred Bears with footsteps rude
 Dance round the pole, pursuing and pursued.

“ There, in her azure coif and starry stole,
 Grey Twilight sits, and rules the slumbering pole;
 Bends the pale moonbeams round the sparkling coast,
 And strews with livid hands eternal frost.
 There, Nymphs! alight, array your dazzling powers,
 With sudden march alarm the torpid hours;
 On icebuilt isles expand a thousand sails,
 Hinge the strong helms, and catch the frozen gales.
 The winged rocks to feverish climates guide,
 Where fainting zephyrs pant upon the tide;
 Pass, where to Centa Calpe's thunder roars,
 And answering echoes shake the kindred shores;
 Pass, where with palmy plumes Canary smiles,
 And in her silver girdle binds her isles:
 Onward, where Niger's dusky Naiad laves
 A thousand kingdoms with prolific waves,
 Or leads o'er golden sands her threefold train
 In steamy channels to the fervid main;
 While swarthy nations crowd the sultry coast,
 Drink the fresh breeze, and hail the floating frost;
 Nymphs! veiled in mist, the melting treasures steer,
 And cool with arctic snows the tropic year.
 So, from the burning line by monsoons driven,
 Clouds sail in squadrons o'er the darkened heaven;
 Wild wastes of sand the gelid gales pervade,
 And ocean cools beneath the moving shade.

“ Should Solstice, stalking through the sickening
 bowers,
 Suck the warm dewdrops, lap the falling showers;
 Kneel with parched lip, and, bending from its brink,
 From dripping palm the scanty river drink;
 Nymphs! o'er the soil ten thousand points erect,
 And high in air the electric flame collect.
 Soon shall dark mists with self-attraction shroud
 The blazing day, and sail in wilds of cloud;

Each silvery flower the streams aërial quaff,
Bow her sweet head, and infant harvest laugh.

“ Thus, when Elijah marked from Carmel’s brow.
In bright expanse the briny flood below ;
Rolled his red eyes amid the scorching air,
Smote his firm breast, and breathed his ardent prayer ;
High in the midst a massy altar stood,
And slaughtered offerings pressed the piles of wood ;
While Israel’s chiefs the sacred hill surround,
And famished armies crowd the dusty ground ;
While proud Idolatry was leagued with dearth,
And withered Famine swept the desert earth :—
‘ Oh ! mighty Lord ! thy wo-worn servant hear,
Who calls thy name in agony of prayer :
Thy fanes dishonoured, and thy prophets slain,
Lo ! I alone survive of all thy train !—
Oh ! send from heaven thy sacred fire, and pour
O’er the parched land the salutary shower ;—
So shall thy priest thy erring flock recall—
And speak in thunder, thou art Lord of all.’
He cried, and, kneeling on the mountain sands,
Stretched high in air his supplicating hands.
Descending flames the dusky shrine illume,
Fire the wet wood, the sacred bull consume ;
Winged from the sea, the gathering mists arise,
And floating waters darken all the skies ;
The king with shifted reins his chariot bends,
And wide o’er earth the airy flood descends ;
With mingling cries dispersing hosts applaud,
And shouting nations own the living God.”

A passage from the intermediate part of this address has been made interesting by the progress of discovery since it was written. In a note Darwin expresses his opinion that steam may probably “ in time be applied to the rowing of barges, and the moving of carriages along the road ;” and he adds, “ As the specific levity of air is too great for the support of great burdens by balloons, there seems no probable method of flying conveniently but by the power of steam, or some other explosive

material, which another half century may probably discover." The most recent great achievement of steam-power as commemorated in the lines that follow was its application in the apparatus for coining copper, erected by Watt for Mr. Boulton at Soho :—

"Nymphs! you erewhile on simmering cauldrons
 played,
 And called delighted Savery to your aid;
 Bade round the youth explosive steam aspire,
 In gathering clouds, and winged the wave with fire;
 Bade with cold streams the quick expansion stop,
 And sunk the immense of vapours to a drop.
 Pressed by the ponderous air the piston falls
 Resistless, sliding through its iron walls;
 Quick moves the balanced beam, of giant birth,
 Wields his large limbs, and nodding shakes the earth.

"The giant power from earth's remotest caves
 Lifts with strong arm her dark reluctant waves;
 Each caverned rock and hidden den explores,
 Drags her dark coals, and digs her shining ores.
 Next, in close cells of ribbed oak confined,
 Gale after gale, he crowds the struggling wind;
 The imprisoned storms through brazen nostrils roar,
 Fan the white flame, and fuse the sparkling ore.
 Here high in air the rising stream he pours
 To clay-built cisterns, or to lead-lined towers;
 Fresh through a thousand pipes the wave distils,
 And thirsty cities drink the exuberant rills.
 There the vast millstone, with inebriate whirl,
 On trembling floors his forceful fingers twirl,
 Whose flinty teeth the golden harvests grind,—
 Feast without blood!—and nourish human kind.

"Now his hard hand on Mona's rifled crest,
 Bosomed in rock, her azure ores arrest;
 With iron lips his rapid rollers seize
 The lengthening bars, in thin expansion squeeze;
 Descending screws with ponderous flywheels wound
 The tawny plates, the new medallions round;

Hard dies of steel the cupreous circles cramp,
And with quick fall his massy hammers stamp.
The harp, the lily, and the lion join,
And George and Britain guard the sterling coin.

“ Soon shall thy arm, unconquered Steam ! afar
Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car ;
Or, on wide-waving wings expanded, bear
The flying chariot through the fields of air.
Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,
Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move ;
Or warrior-bands alarm the gaping crowd,
And armies sink beneath the shadowy cloud.

“ So mighty Hercules o’er many a clime
Waved his vast mace in Virtue’s cause sublime ;
Unmeasured strength with early art combined,
Awed, served, protected, and amazed mankind.
First, two dread snakes, at Juno’s vengeful nod,
Climbed round the cradle of the sleeping god ;
Waked by the shrilling hiss, and rustling sound,
And shrieks of fair attendants trembling round,
Their gasping throats with clenching hands he holds ;
And death entwists their convoluted folds.
Next in red torrents from her seven-fold heads
Fell Hydra’s blood on Lerna’s lake he sheds ;
Grasps Achelous with resistless force,
And drags the roaring river to his course ;
Binds with loud bellowing and with hideous yell
The monster bull, and three-fold god of hell.

“ Then, where Nemea’s howling forests wave,
He drives the lion to his dusky cave ;
Seized by the throat the growling fiend disarms,
And tears his gaping jaws with sinewy arms ;
Lifts proud Antaeus from his mother-plains,
And with strong grasp the struggling giant strains ;
Back falls his fainting head, and clammy hair,
Writhe his weak limbs, and flits his life in air.
By steps reverted o’er the blood-dropped fen
He tracks huge Cacus to his murderous den ;
Where, breathing flames through brazen lips, he fled,
And shakes the rock-roofed cavern o’er his head.

“ Last, with wide arms the solid earth he tears,
Piles rock on rock, on mountain mountain rears ;

Heaves up huge Abyla on Afric's sand,
 Crowns with high Calpe Europe's salient strand,
 Crests with opposing towers the splendid scene,
 And pours from urns immense the sea between.
 Loud o'er her whirling flood Charybdis roars,
 Affrighted Scylla bellows round her shores,
 Vesuvio groans through all his echoing caves,
 And Etna thunders o'er the insurgent waves."

From the address to the Gnomes, or earth-nymphs, which occupies the second canto, we will extract our author's explanation, or theory, of "the fine forms on Portland's mystic vase"—the beautiful and world-renowned vase lately so wantonly injured:—

"Here, by fallen columns and disjoined arcades,
 On mouldering stones, beneath deciduous shades,
 Sits human-kind, in hieroglyphic state,
 Serious, and pondering on their changeful fate;
 While, with inverted torch and swimming eyes,
 Sinks the fair shade of mortal life, and dies.
 There, the pale ghost through death's wide portal bends
 His timid feet, the dusky steep descends:
 With smiles assuasive love divine invites,
 Guides on broad wing, with torch-uptifted lights;
 Immortal life, her hand extending, courts
 The lingering form, his tottering step supports;
 Leads on to Pluto's realms the dreary way,
 And gives him trembling to Elysian day.
 Beneath, in sacred robes the priestess dressed,
 The coif close-hooded, and the fluttering vest,
 With pointed finger guides the initiate youth,
 Unweaves the many-coloured veil of truth,
 Drives the profane from mystery's bolted door,
 And silence guards the Eleusinian lore."

As a specimen of Darwin's skill in the description of material phenomena in verse, we will give the passage on weaving and spinning, including Arkwright's then novel invention of mechanical cotton-spinning, from the second canto of the *Loves of the Plants*:—

Inventress of the woof, fair Lina^b flings
 The flying shuttle through the dancing strings ;
 Inlays the brodered west with flowery dyes ;
 Quick beat the reeds, the pedals fall and rise ;
 Slow from the beam the lengths of warp unwind,
 And dance and nod the massy weights behind.
 Taught by her labours, from the fertile soil
 Immortal Isis clothed the banks of Nile ;
 And fair Arachne with her rival loom
 Found undeserved a melancholy doom.
 Five^c sister nymphs with dewy fingers twine
 The beamy flax, and stretch the fibre-line ;
 Quick eddying threads from rapid spindles reel,
 Or whirl with beating foot the dizzy wheel.
 Charm'd round the busy fair five shepherds press,
 Praise the nice texture of their snowy dress,
 Admire the artists, and the art approve,
 And tell with honeyed words the tale of love.

So now, where Derwent rolls his dusky floods
 Through vaulted mountains, and a night of woods,
 The nymph Gossypia^d treads the velvet sod,
 And warms with rosy smiles the watery god ;
 His ponderous oars to slender spindles turns,
 And pours o'er massy wheels his foamy urns ;
 With playful charms her hoary lover wins,
 And wields his trident, while the monarch spins.
 First, with nice eye emerging Naiads cull
 From leathery pods the vegetable wool ;
 With wiry teeth revolving cards release
 The tangled knots, and smooth the ravelled fleece ;
 Next moves the iron hand with fingers fine,
 Combs the wide card, and forms the eternal line ;
 Slow, with soft lips, the whirling can acquires
 The tender skeins, and wraps in rising spires ;
 With quickened pace successive rollers move,
 And these retain, and those extend the rove ;
 Then fly the spokes, the rapid axles glow,
 And slowly circumples the labouring wheel below.

^b From the Latin name for flax, *linum*.

^c The plant *Linum*, in the Linnæan system, has five males and five females in each flower.

^d From *Gossypium*, the cotton plant.

In all this, however, it must be confessed, there is more of ingenuity than of poetry. The excess of emphasis, and overcrowding of all the artifices and licences of the poetical style, into which Darwin runs, would, if there were nothing else, betray the process of hard hammering, and, as it were, manual force and dexterity, by which he fabricated his verse; but his theory of poetry, as we have intimated above, was also radically vicious. Take the single figure of impersonation, in which he deals so largely. We shall all admit that there are bounds to the employment of this figure. Its effect is to represent a mere thing or idea as a living and individual being. But this can only be done with any poetical result in cases in which there is a natural disposition in the general mind, when in a state of excitement, to view the matter in that light. Sometimes such a tendency is checked by certain constituents or accessories of the object of too inherently mean or trivial a character, or too distinctly obtruding its real nature upon the senses or the imagination, to allow of its being thus metamorphosed and exalted; but it is enough that there should merely be nothing in it or about it to respond to the exertion of the poet's skill. Throughout all nature, moral and material, there must be the proper sort of worth in the substance wrought upon, as well as in the instrument, or no worthy effect will be produced. The steel that strikes fire from the flint will strike none from the brick. No husbandry can raise a harvest on a sandy sea-beach. The best teaching will not illuminate a blockhead, nor the kindest help be of any enduring service to the man who can do nothing for himself. So in the treatment of a subject poetically; it cannot be done unless there be

poetry in the subject, as well as in the writer. No poetical power or skill, for example, could give any grandeur or solemnity to the *prosopopœia* either of a wheelbarrow, or of the art of making wheelbarrows. It would merely turn out something utterly flat and dead, if it did not prove ridiculous. It would resemble an attempt to compound gunpowder out of sulphur and common earth. The great constituent elements of the poetical in the nature of things are few in number. Whatever can be made to flash a new combination, or other exciting image, upon the fancy admits of poetical treatment and embellishment in an inferior degree; but all high poetry has its source in passion,—in veneration, in love, in terror, in hatred, in revenge, or some other of those strong emotions that, as it were, transport the mind out of and above itself, and give it to see as with a new intelligence and with other organs. But such emotions are not to be excited by such phenomena, whether of art or nature, as those with which Darwin's poetry principally deals. Many of the processes of mechanics, of chemistry, of vegetation, which he describes, are in the highest degree curious and interesting, philosophically or scientifically considered; but that is quite a different thing from being poetically interesting or exciting. We may almost say that the one quality is directly opposed to and destructive of the other. Poetry and science are two rival and hostile powers. The latter is continually employed in encroaching upon and subjugating to itself the dominion of the former, which, however, is happily infinite in extent, so that, no matter how much of it may be thus wrested away, it never can suffer any real diminution. Whenever any thing has been perfectly reduced to matter

of science, its poetical character is extinguished : it ceases to appeal to any passion or affection. What was veneration or terror, religion or superstition, becomes now satisfied and unimpassioned intelligence. Imagination is dethroned there, its creative power abolished and destroyed, its transforming illumination made impossible. Even mere wonder, the lowest of all the imaginative states of mind, ceases when the scientific comprehension is complete ; for, of course, when understood, no one thing is really more wonderful than another, any more than it is essentially more majestic ;—the blue sky is but “ a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours ”—its golden fires, the ever-circling squadrons of the host of heaven, the suns and planets of a million systems, but another form or development of some such humble and commonplace incident as the rising of the dust from the high-road on a windy day, or of the smoke any day from a kitchen chimney. The tendency of science is to reduce and level ; the tendency of poetry is to magnify and exalt. Each, therefore, has its proper and peculiar ground ; they cannot act in concert, and upon the same ground : in other words, it is impossible to treat any subject at once scientifically and poetically. This is what Darwin has attempted, or professes, to do ; but in truth the spirit of his poetry is scientific, and only the form poetical. His verses are profusely decorated with similitudes and other poetical figures and forms of speech ; but both the manner in which he views his subject, and his subject itself, are anti-poetical. His poetry appeals to none of what may be called our original and universal sympathies. It addresses itself, not to our hearts as moulded and inspired by nature and by those common influences

of various kinds which are to us almost a second nature, but to our heads, as artificially, accidentally, and unequally furnished, or stuffed, by books, or colleges, or laboratories. For the most part, therefore, it fails of making any deep impression; but not unfrequently the effect is even jarring, and a note is struck altogether different from what the poet intended, just as would happen with a musician, who, with whatever power of fingering, or other brilliancy in execution, should persist in disregarding any natural peculiarity of his instrument. As little or no aid is sought from the ordinary associations which may be presumed to be in the reader's mind, so whenever it is convenient such associations and preconceptions are outraged without hesitation. Thus a story of two lovers (in the address to the Water Nymphs, in the third canto of the Economy of Vegetation), intended to be very pathetic, is commenced in the following droll fashion :—

“Where were ye, nymphs? in those disastrous hours
Which wrapt in flames Augusta's^e sinking towers?
Why did ye linger in your wells and groves
When sad Woodmason mourned her infant loves?
*When thy fair daughters, with unheeded screams,
Ill-fated Molesworth! called the loitering streams?*

We must give the rest of this narrative for the sake of some choice Darwinian epithets, and other flowers of speech :—

“The trembling nymph, on bloodless fingers hung,
Eyes from the tottering wall the distant throng,
With ceaseless shrieks her sleeping friends alarms,
Drops with singed hair into her lover's arms.

*The illumined mother seeks with footsteps fleet
 Where hangs the safe balcony o'er the street;
 Wrapped in her sheet, her youngest hope suspends,
 And, panting, lowers it to her tiptoe friends;
 Again she hurries on affection's wings,
 And now a third, and now a fourth she brings;
 Safe all her babes, she smooths her horrent brow,
 And bursts through bickering flames, unscorched below.
 So, by her son arraigned, with feet unshod
 O'er burning bars indignant Emma trod.*

*"E'en on the day when youth with beauty wed,
 The flames surprised them in their nuptial bed;
 Seen at the opening sash with bosom bare,
 With wringing hands and dark dishevelled hair,
 The blushing bride with wild disordered charms
 Round her fond lover winds her ivory arms;
 Beat, as they clasp, their throbbing hearts with fear,
 And many a kiss is mixed with many a tear.
 Ah me! in vain the labouring engines pour
 Round their pale limbs the ineffectual shower!
 Then crashed the floor, while shrinking clouds retire,
 And love and virtue sunk amid the fire!
 With piercing screams afflicted strangers mourn,
 And their white ashes mingle in their urn."*

Besides that every line in this laboured description is manifestly prompted and regulated chiefly by the necessities of the metre, were it not that the most prosaic or most affected account of such a situation cannot hide its real horrors, the picture of the blushing, and the kissing, and the winding of the ivory arms, and the ineffectual deluging of the pale limbs, would be almost ludicrous. But the sense of the ludicrous was wanting in Darwin: as there is little genuine pathos in any thing he has written, so there is not a trace of humour. It is in his first published poem, however, 'The Loves of the Plants' (now forming the second part of the 'Botanic Garden'), that this insensibility to the ridiculous is most remark-

ably shown ; the whole conception of that performance, the idea of making a serious poem out of the Linnæan system of botany, is an absurdity which would be incredible if the thing had not been actually attempted. In what manner, and with what success, let the commencement of the singular rhapsody show :—

First the tall Canna^r lifts his curled brow
Erect to heaven, and plights his nuptial vow ;
The virtuous pair, in milder regions born,
Dread the rude blast of autumn's icy morn ;
Round the chill fair he folds his crimson vest,
And clasps the timorous beauty to his breast.

Thy love, Callitriche,^s two virgins share,
Smit with thy starry eye and radiant hair ;
On the green margin sits the youth, and laves
His floating train of tresses in the waves ;
Sees his fair features paint the streams that pass,
And bends for ever o'er the watery glass.

Two brother swains, of Collin's gentle name,^h
The same their features, and their forms the same,
With rival love for fair Collinia sigh,
Knit the dark brow, and roll the unsteady eye.
With sweet concern the pitying beauty mourns,
And soothes with smiles the jealous pair by turns.

Sweet blooms Genistaⁱ in the myrtle shade,
And ten fond brothers woo the haughty maid.
Two knights before thy fragrant altar bend,
Adored Melissa,^j and two squires attend.
Meadia's^k soft chains five suppliant beaux confess,
And hand in hand the laughing belle address ;

^r The cane, or Indian reed ; each flower of which contains one male and one female.

^s Fine-hair, star-grass ; one male and two females.

^h Collinsonia ; two males and one female.

ⁱ Dyer's broom ; ten males and one female.

^j Balm ; four males and one female.

American cowslip ; five males and one female.

Alike to all she bows with wanton air,
Rolls her dark eye, and waves her golden hair.

Woody with long care, Curcuma,¹ cold and shy,
Meets her fond husband with averted eye :
Four beardless youths the obdurate beauty move
With soft attentions of Platonic love.

With vain desires the pensive Alcea^m burns
And, like sad Eloisa, loves and mourns.
The freckled Irisⁿ owns a fiercer flame,
And three unjealous husbands wed the dame.
Cupressus^o dark disdains his dusky bride ;
One dome contains them, but two beds divide.
The proud Osyris^p flies his angry fair ;
Two houses hold the fashionable pair.
With strange deformity Plantago^q treads,
A monster birth ! and lifts his hundred heads.
Yet with soft love a gentle belle he charms,
And clasps the beauty in his hundred arms.
So hapless Desdemona, fair and young,
Won by Othello's captivating tongue,
Sighed o'er each strange and piteous tale distressed,
And sunk enamoured on his sooty breast.

Is all this really a whit less ridiculous than the parody
of it in ' The Loves of the Triangles ? '—

For me, ye Cissoids, round my temples bend
Your wandering curves ; ye Conchoids, extend ;
Let playful Pendules quick vibration feel,
While silent Cyclois rests upon her wheel ;
Let Hydrostatics, simpering as they go,
Lead the light Naiads on fantastic toe ;
Let shrill Acoustics tune the tiny lyre ;
With Euclid sage fair Algebra conspire ;

¹ Turmeric; one male and one female, together with four filaments without anthers.

^m Double hollyhocks.

ⁿ Flower-de-luce; three males and one female.

^o Cypress.

^p The males and females of the Osyris are on different plants.

^q Rose-plantain.

The obedient Pulley strong Mechanics ply ;
And wanton Optics roll the melting eye.

Alas that partial Science should approve
The sly Rectangle's too licentious love !
For three bright nymphs the wily wizard burns ;
Three bright-eyed nymphs requite his flame by turns.

And first the fair Parabola behold
Her timid arms with virgin blush unfold !
Though on one focus fixed, her eyes betray
A heart that glows with love's resistless sway ;
Though, climbing oft, she strive with bolder grace
Round his tall neck to clasp her fond embrace,
Still, ere she reach it, from his polished side
Her trembling hands in devious Tangents glide.
Not thus Hyperbole ;—with subtlest art
The blue-eyed wanton plays her changeful part.

Yet why, Ellipsis, at thy fate repine ?
More lasting bliss, securer joys are thine.
Though to each fair his treacherous wish may stray,
Though each in turn may seize a transient sway,
'Tis thine with mild coercion to restrain,
Twine round his struggling heart, and bind with endless chain.

So down thy hill, romantic Ashbourn, glides
The Derby Dilly, carrying three insides.
One in each corner sits, and lolls at ease,
With folded arms, propped back, and outstretched knees ;
While the pressed Bodkin, punched and squeezed to death,
Sweats in the midmost place, and scolds, and pants for breath.

ANNA SEWARD.—LADY MILLER.—THE DELLA CRUSCANS.

It must be regarded as a real misfortune for Dr. Dar-
fame, though a ludicrous one, that he should have

had such a biographer and commentator upon his works as Miss Anna Seward. Anna has herself a claim upon our notice as one of the poetical lights of this time. Besides various contributions to magazines, she emitted separately, and with her name, in the last twenty years of the century, a succession of elegies, monodies, odes, sonnets, poetical epistles, adieus, &c., about Captain Cook, Major André, Lady Miller of Batheaston, and other persons and things, which were generally read in their day, and were, after her death, in 1809, at the age of sixty-two, collected and republished in three octavo volumes under the care of Walter Scott, who had formed her acquaintance in the early part of his career, and upon whom she had imposed the honour of being her literary executor. A selection from her Letters, which she had bequeathed to Constable, the Edinburgh bookseller, appeared about the same time in six volumes. But decidedly her most remarkable performance, and the one by which her name is likely to be the longest preserved, is the octavo volume she gave to the world in 1804, under the title of 'Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin, chiefly during his residence at Lichfield, with Anecdotes of his Friends, and Criticisms on his Writings.' Here we have Anna herself, as well as her friend the poetic Doctor, at full length. Anna's notion is, that the Botanic Garden ought to have been her poem, not Darwin's, if matters had been fairly managed. The Doctor, it seems, about the year 1777, purchased "a little, wild, umbrageous valley, a mile from Lichfield, irriguous from various springs, and swampy from their plenitude." This he soon dressed up into a very neat imitation of Paradise, and then, having till now "restrained his friend I

Seward's steps to this her always favourite scene," he allowed her to visit it, when, the lady informs us, " she took her tablets and pencil, and, seated on a flower-bank, in the midst of that luxuriant retreat, wrote the following lines, while the sun was gilding the glen, and while birds of every plume poured their song from the boughs." Now, be it observed, the Doctor was not even with her on the flower-bank: it was intended that they should have gone to see Paradise together, " but a medical summons into the country deprived her of that pleasure." The lines, therefore, were wholly the produce of her own particular muse and her own black-lead pencil. They are substantially the commencing lines of the First Book of the ' Botanic Garden.' When the authoress presented them to Darwin, he said that they ought to form the exordium of a great work, and proposed that Anna should write such a work " on the unexplored poetic ground of the Linnæan system," to which he would provide prose notes. Anna answered, modestly, " that, besides her want of botanic knowledge, the plan was not strictly proper for a female pen"—but that she thought it was just the thing for " the efflorescence of his own fancy." It would appear that, soon after this, Darwin began the composition of his great poem; but previously, the lady tells us, a few weeks after they were composed, he " sent the verses Miss S. wrote in his Botanic Garden (that is, the Lichfield Paradise, so called) to the ' Gentleman's Magazine,' and in her name."—" From thence," she proceeds, " they were copied in the ' Annual Register' [where we have not been able to find them]; but, without consulting her, he had substituted for the last six lines eight of his own.

He afterwards, and again without the knowledge of their author, made them the exordium to the first part of his poem, published, for certain reasons, some years after the second part had appeared. No acknowledgment was made that those verses were the work of another pen. Such acknowledgment ought to have been made, especially since they passed the press in the name of their real author. 'They are somewhat altered in the exordium to Dr. Darwin's poem, and eighteen lines of his own are interwoven with them.' The lines having been only forty-six originally, and twenty-six of those in the Doctor's exordium being thus admitted to be of his own composition, it might seem that the theft was reduced to a somewhat small matter; but Miss Seward, not unreasonably, holds that in thus rifling her poem, probably of its best verses, Darwin did her the same injury as if he had appropriated the whole; and therefore in returning, in a subsequent page, to this "extraordinary, and, in a poet of so much genius, unprecedented instance of plagiarism," and quoting against him one of his own critical canons, that "a few common flowers of speech may be gathered as we pass over our neighbour's ground, but we must not plunder his cultivated fruit," she bitterly charges him with having "forgotten that just restraint when he took, unacknowledged, *forty-six entire lines*, the published verses of his friend, for the exordium of the first part of his work." After all, it has been doubted by the world if that scene of the flower-bank and the tablets was anything more than a pleasant dream of Anna's, or if she had anything to do with the authorship of the forty-six verses at all, beyond allowing them to be published with her name in the magazines.

has been proved to be incorrect in her recollections of other matters, about which she was as obstinate as she was about this: her memory had the worst defect, of being apt to remember too much.

Miss Seward's own poetry, with much more sentimentality and much less sense and substance, belongs to the same school with Darwin's. Hers is the feeble commonplace of the same laboured, tortuous, and essentially unnatural and untrue style out of which he, with his more powerful and original genius, has evolved for himself a distinctive form or dialect. This style has subsisted among us, in one variation or another, and with more or less of temporary acceptance, in every era of our poetry. It is mimicked by Pope, in his 'Song by a Person of Quality, written in the year 1733;' it is the Euphuism of the Elizabethan age, gently ridiculed by Shakspeare, in his *Love's Labours Lost*, though then made brilliant and imposing by the wit and true poetic genius of Lilly; it is the same thing that is travestied by Chaucer in his *Rime of Sir Thopas*. Perhaps, however, it had in no former time made so much din, or risen to such apparent ascendancy, as at the date of which we are now speaking, the last years of the eighteenth century. Nor had it ever before assumed a shape or character at once so extravagant and so hollow of all real worth or power. The first impulse seems to have been caught from Italy, the foreign country whose literature has in every age exercised, for good or for evil, the greatest influence upon our own. The writers of what is called the Della Cruscan school had their predecessors and progenitors in the small manufacturers of rhyme, male and female, collected about her by the famous Lady Miller, who,

when she set up her Parnassus and Wedgwood-ware vase at Batheaston, and established the weekly competitions in elegies and epigrams, songs and sonnets, which went on through the instrumentality of the said mystic vase till her death in 1781, had just returned from a tour in Italy with her husband, of which she published an account, in three volumes of 'Letters,' in 1776. Their performances were given to the world under the title of 'Poetical amusements at a Villa near Bath,' in a succession of volumes which appeared between 1770 and 1780. Miss Seward was one of the contributors to this Batheaston poetry. It does not seem, however, to have attracted much notice beyond the circle in which the writers and their patroness moved; at most it was regarded as belonging rather to the provincial than to either the national or the metropolitan literature of the time. In the Della Cruscan school the thing came to a head. "In 1785," as the matter is recorded in the Introduction to the Baviad and Mæviad, "a few English of both sexes, whom chance had jumbled together at Florence, took a fancy to while away their time in scribbling high-flown panegyrics on themselves; and complimentary canzonettas on two or three Italians, who understood too little of the language in which they were written to be disgusted with them." Among them were Mrs. Piozzi, the widow of Johnson's friend Thrale, now the wife of her daughter's music-master; Mr. Bertie Greathead, a man of property and good family; Mr. Robert Merry, who specially took to himself the designation of Della Crusca; Mr. William Parsons, another English gentleman of fortune; &c. These people first printed a volume of their rhymes under the title of 'T'

Florence Miscellany. Afterwards they and a number of other persons, their admirers and imitators, began to publish their lucubrations in England, chiefly in two new daily newspapers, called *The World* and *The Oracle*; from which they were soon collected, and recommended with vast laudation to the public attention, in a volume entitled *The Album*, by Bell the printer. "While the epidemic malady was spreading from fool to fool," continues Gifford, "*Della Crusca* came over, and immediately announced himself by a sonnet to Love. Anna Matilda wrote an incomparable piece of nonsense in praise of it; and the two 'great luminaries of the age,' as Mr. Bell calls them, fell desperately in love with each other. From that period not a day passed without an amatory epistle, fraught with lightning and thunder, et quicquid habent telorum armamentaria coeli. The fever turned to a frenzy: Laura Maria, Carlos, Orlando, Adelaide, and a thousand other nameless names caught the infection; and, from one end of the kingdom to the other, all was nonsense and *Della Crusca*." After this had gone on for some time, Gifford took up his pen, and in 1794, produced his '*Baviad*,' which, in 1796, was followed by its continuation, the '*Mæviad*.' It is only in these two poems that the memory of most of the unhappy *Della Cruscan* songsters has been preserved—an immortality which may be compared with that conferred by the *Newgate Calendar*. We may transfer to our historic page the principal names, in addition to those already mentioned, that figure in these celebrated satires—adding a few particulars as to some of them gleaned from other sources. A few of the writers, we may remark, that got bespattered in the course of Gifford's somewhat energetic horse-play, have

survived and recovered from his corrosive mud and any connexion they may have had with the Della Cruscan folly:—such as the dramatists O’Keefe, Morton, Reynolds, and Holcroft; the younger Colman, who had already, in 1795, produced his *Sylvester Daggerwood*, besides other dramatic pieces; Mrs. Cowley, the clever authoress of *The Belle’s Stratagem*; and no less a person than the prince of biographers, James Boswell, of whose Johnsonianism, however, people in general as yet discerned only the ludicrous excess;—not to speak of such rather more than respectable rhymers as Edward Jer-ningham, the author of numerous plays and poems; Miles Peter Andrews, famous for his prologues and epilogues, which were occasionally lively as well as rattling; and perhaps we ought also to add, in a proper spirit of gallantry, the somewhat too famous Mrs. Robinson, who, with all her levity, intellectual as well as moral, was not without some literary talent and poetical feeling. Mrs. Piozzi too, of course, though not the wisest of women, must be held to have been by no means *all* ignorance and pretension. But the general herd of the Della Cruscans may be safely set down as having been mere blatant blockheads. Of some of the fictitious signatures quoted by Gifford we find no interpretation: such as Arno, Cesario, Julia, &c. Others of the names he mentions are real names. Topham, for instance, is Mr. Edward Topham, the proprietor of *The World*; ‘monosoph Este,’ as he calls him, is the Rev. Charles Este, principal editor of that paper; Weston is Joseph Weston, a small magazine critic of the day. Two of the minor offenders, to whom he deals a lash or two in passing, are James Cobbe, a now-forgotten farce-writer; and Fr

rick Pilon, who was, we believe, a player by profession. The more conspicuous names, besides Merry and Greathead, are Mit Yenda, or Mot Yenda, stated to be the anagram of a Mr. Timothy or Thomas Adney, of whom we know nothing; Edwin, which stands for a Mr. Thomas Vaughan, the same person, we suppose, who wrote a farce called *The Hotel*, and one or two other things of the same sort, about twenty years before this time; and especially Tony or Anthony Pasquin, the *nom de guerre* of a John Williams, the author of loads both of verse and prose. If we may judge by a collection of the 'Poems,' as they are called, of this Williams, or Pasquin, published, in two volumes, in 1789—a second edition, with a long list of subscribers, sparkling with titled names—Gifford's representation of the emptiness, feebleness, and sounding stupidity of the *Della Cruscans* is no exaggeration at all. Nothing, certainly, was ever printed on decent paper more worthless and utterly despicable in every way than this poetry of the great Anthony Pasquin, who, in quite a lofty and patronising style, dedicates one of his volumes to Mr. Pitt, and the other in part to Sir Joshua Reynolds, in part to Warren Hastings (so economically does he distribute the precious honour);—who has all these three distinguished persons among his subscribers, in company with most of the rank and eminence of the time;—and whom his friends and admirers, West Dudley Digges, W. Whitby of Cambridge, Thomas Bellamy, Frederick Pilon, William Upton, and J. Butler—all, he tells us, "of high estimation in the world of literature,"—in a series of introductory odes and other rhyming laudations, extol as another Martial and Juvenal combined,—the reformer

of the age—the scourge of folly—animating the just criticism of Persius with a brighter fire than Churchill's—"at once the Pride and Terror of the Land"—a Dryden come to life again—the greatest wit since Butler—a giant, magnanimous and proud, fit only to contend with giants. "Our children's children," exclaims Dudley Digges,

"Our children's children o'er thy honour'd dust
Shall raise the sculptured tomb and laurel'd bust;
Inscribe the stone with monumental woe,
While the big tears in gushing torrents flow!"

"Resistless bard!" Pilon breaks out—

"by every science owned,
Thou shalt be universally renowned!
Well may you tread all competition down:
Originality is all your own."

But far beyond this is the fine frenzy of William Upton. "Pasquin!" roars out this idiot striving to get in a passion—

"Pasquin! Can nought thy daring pen impede,
Or stem the venom of thy critic gall?
Shall thy effusions make whole legions bleed,
And thou sit smiling as their numbers fall?"

"By heaven! I'll probe thee to the heart's warm core,
If Thespis hurl again his satire round,
E'en thy existence, by the god's, I've sworn
To bring, by strength Samsonian, to the ground!"

"For know, that giants should with giants vie, &c."

And afterwards—

"Imperious tyrant, doth my threats affright
Thy yet ungovern'd and undaunted soul?
Or rather fill thee with renewed delight,
Such as when Paris lovely Helen stole?"

So much for contemporary praise—at least when e

mated by the number and vehemence rather than by the true worth and authority of the voices ! This man Upton, too, had published at least one volume of rhymes of his own, and no doubt was looked upon by many others as well as by himself as one of the poetical luminaries of the age. The matter we have quoted, however, may serve to give a right notion of the whole of this singular phenomenon—of what the Della Cruscan poetry was, and also of the nature and extent of the celebrity and admiration which it for a time enjoyed. Of course, it could not deceive the higher order of cultivated minds ; but even in what is called the literary world there are always numbers of persons easily imposed upon as to such matters, and at the same time favourably placed for imposing upon others ; poetical antiquaries, editors, and commentators, for example, who, naturally enough, take themselves, and are taken by the multitude, to be the best judges of the article which it seems to be in a manner their trade to deal in, but who, in truth, for the most part do not know good poetry from bad, or from no poetry at all. Witness the manner in which about this very time some of the most laborious of the Shakspearian commentators, and other literati of high name, were taken in by the miserable forgeries of Ireland. No wonder, then, that Tony Pasquin too had his literary as well as fashionable admirers. No doubt his chief acceptance, and that of the other Della Cruscan warblers, male and female, was with what is (or rather was, for the phrase in that sense is now gone out) called the town—in other words, the mere populace of the reading world, whose voice is not, and cannot be, more potential for any enduring effect than that of any other mob ; yet the

discreditable infatuation—the parallel of that of Queen Titania for Bottom the weaver, with his ass's head—

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:

Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note—

might have lasted considerably longer, and even spread farther than it did, had it not been checked by Gifford's vigorous exposure and castigation. He himself intimates, in the Preface to the *Mæviad*, that he had been charged with breaking butterflies upon a wheel; but "many a man," he adds, "who now affects to pity me for wasting my strength upon unresisting imbecility, would, not long since, have heard their poems with applause, and their praises with delight." On the other hand, their great patron, Bell, the printer, accused him of "bespattering nearly all the poetical eminence of the day." "But, on the whole," he says, "the clamour against me was not loud; and was lost by insensible degrees in the applause of such as I was truly ambitious to please. Thus supported, the good effects of the satire (*glorioso loquor*) were not long in manifesting themselves. Della Crusca appeared no more in the Oracle, and, if any of his followers ventured to treat the town with a soft sonnet, it was not, as before, introduced by a pompous preface. Pope and Milton resumed their superiority; and Este and his coadjutors silently acquiesced in the growing opinion of their incompetency, and showed some sense of shame."

THE SHAKSPEARE PAPERS.

Of the forgeries of William Henry Ireland it is only necessary to record that, after the pretended old parchments had been exhibited for some months in Norfo'

street, where they were beheld and perused with vast reverence and admiration by sundry eminent scholars and critics, their contents were printed in December, 1795, in a magnificent two-guinea folio, published by subscription among the believers, with the title of 'Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments, under the hand and seal of William Shakspeare, including the Tragedy of King Lear, and a small fragment of Hamlet, from the original MSS. ;' that the professed editor was Samuel Ireland; the father of the fabricator ; that the tragedy of 'Kynge Vorrtygerne,' an additional piece of manufacture from the same workshop, was brought out at Drury Lane in March following ; that Malone's conclusive 'Inquiry into the Authenticity' of the papers appeared just in time to herald that performance ; that young Ireland himself the same year acknowledged the imposition (at the same time acquitting his father of all share in it) in his 'Authentic Account of the Shakspeare Manuscripts' (afterwards extended in his 'Confessions relative to the Shakspeare Forgery,' published in 1805) ; and that, notwithstanding all this, George Chalmers came out in 1797, with 'An Apology for the Believers,' which he followed up with another thick octavo, entitled 'A Supplemental Apology,' two years after. Malone's exposure, founded entirely on evidence external to the merits of the poetry thus impudently attributed to Shakspeare, was, as we have said, demonstrative enough ; but it ought not to have been required : the wretched rubbish should have been its own sufficient refutation. Vortigern, indeed, was damned, after Malone had sounded his catcall ; but that persons occupying such positions in the literary world as Pye, the poet laureate,

Boswell, John Pinkerton, George Chalmers, Dr. Parr, &c., should have mistaken, as they did, the poetry of Ireland for that of Shakspeare, could only have happened in a time in which there was very little true feeling generally diffused, even among persons to whom the public naturally looked up for guidance in such matters, either of Shakspeare or of poetry. The Shakspeare papers were a very proper and natural sequel to the Della Cruscan poetry.

THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE.

Contemporaneously with Gifford's 'Baviad and Mæviad' appeared another remarkable satirical poem, 'The Pursuits of Literature,' now known to have been written by the late Thomas James Mathias, the author of many other pieces both in verse and prose (among the rest, of a number of poetical compositions in Italian, published in the latter part of his life), although, we believe, it never was publicly acknowledged by him. The First Part, or Dialogue, of the Pursuits of Literature came out in May, 1794; the Second and Third together, in May, 1796; the Fourth and last in July, 1797. The Four Dialogues were collected and republished together in January, 1798: this is called the fifth edition; before the end of the same year two more editions had been called for; and that before us, dated 1805, is numbered the thirteenth. The poem, which consists in all of only between 1500 and 1600 lines, spread over a volume of 450 pages, takes a general survey both of the literature and politics of its day; but the interest of the work lies chiefly in the prose prefaces and notes, the quantity

which amounts to about ten times that of the verse. And, in truth, the prose is in every way the cleverest and most meritorious part of the performance. Mathias's gift of song was not of a high order; his poetry is of the same school with Gifford's, but the verse of the *Pursuits of Literature* has neither the terseness and pungency nor the occasional dignity and elegance which make that of the '*Baviad and Mæviad*' so successful an echo of Pope—the common master of both writers. The notes, however, though splenetic, and informed by a spirit of uncompromising partisanship, are written with a sharp pen, as well as in a scholarly style, and, in addition to much Greek and Latin learning, contain a good deal of curious disquisition and anecdote. Most of the literary and political notorieties, great and small, of that day, are noticed by the author—himself not excepted;* and it is interesting and amusing to look back from this distance, and to remark how time has dealt with the several names introduced, and what final judgments she has passed on his likings and dislikings.

OTHER SATIRICAL POETRY.—MASON.—THE *BOLLIAD*.—
PROBATIONARY ODES.—PETER PINDAR.

This may be said to have been especially the age of literary and political satire in England. Most of it, however, was in a lighter style than the '*Pursuits of Literature*' or the '*Baviad and Mæviad*.' These poems were the energetic invectives of Juvenal and Persius after the more airy ridicule of Horace. Perhaps the

* See a note on line 151 of *Dialogue First*, where mention is made of 'Mr. Mathias's candid and comprehensive Essay' Rowley's poems (written in defence of their authenticity).

liveliest and happiest of all the quick succession of similar *jeux d'esprit* that appeared from the first unsettlement of the power and supremacy of Lord North to the termination of the war of parties by the firm establishment of the premiership of Pitt, was Richard Tickell's 'Anticipation,' published a few days before the meeting of parliament in November, 1778. It was an anticipation of the king's speech and the coming debates on it in the two Houses; and so much to the life was each noble lord and honourable member hit off, that, it is said, they one after another, to the infinite amusement of their hearers, fell in their actual orations into the forms of expression and modes of argument and illustration that had been assigned to them, only drifting the faster and the farther in that direction the more they strove to take another course. Poor Tickell, the grandson of Addison's friend, Thomas Tickell, after making the town merry by other sportive effusions both in prose and verse, put an end to his life by throwing himself from his bedroom window at Hampton Court Palace in November, 1793. The 'Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers,' with its 'Heroic Postscript,' and the 'Odes' to Dr. Shebbeare, to Sir Fletcher Norton, &c., which appeared in 1782 under the name of Malcolm MacGregor, of Knightsbridge, Esq., and are now known to have been the productions of the poet Mason, have been already noticed. A fortunate subject did as much perhaps for the first and most famous of these pieces as any remarkable merit there was in its execution; indeed, the verses would have needed to be golden indeed to give any extraordinary value to so short a performance. The 'Heroic Epistle' is only an affair of 146 lines, w

a few slight prose notes. But, although Sir William's Oriental principles of gardening afforded matter for solemn ridicule which it was impossible for him to fail in turning to some account, Mason had more spite than wit, and his wordy, laboured verse is for the most part rather insolent than caustic. The next political satire that made much noise at the time, and is still remembered, was the famous 'Rolliad,' which appeared in a series of papers in the latter part of 1784 and beginning of 1785, immediately after the great struggle between Pitt and the Coalition. The 'Rolliad'—so named after the late Lord Rolle, then Colonel John Rolle, one of the members for Devonshire, and a staunch adherent to the party of Pitt and the court—was a volley of prose and verse from the side of the defeated Coalition. One of the persons principally concerned in it is understood to have been the eminent civilian, Dr. French Laurence, Burke's friend; another is believed to have been the late George Ellis, the author of the *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, &c. Its tone and manner are jocular; but it is easy to see that the writers were at heart not a little angry, and that they were bent on doing mischief. The satire is daringly personal and not unfrequently coarse, going to a much greater length in both ways than our present manners would allow. The vindictive spirit out of which it comes, too, is shown both by the pertinacity with which the more eminent victims are again and again attacked, and by the eagerness with which the smaller game also are hunted down and torn to pieces. Nobody escapes, from the new premier down to the most nameless among his retainers. Yet all this is done, as we have said, with much gaiety

and laughter; and the epigrams are often as brilliant as they are stinging and exasperating. The 'Rolliad' was followed, first by a small volume of 'Political Eclogues,' and then by the 'Probationary Odes for the Laureateship,' published after the election of Thomas Warton to that office on the vacancy occasioned by the death of William Whitehead. The Odes, which are supposed to be recited by their respective authors before the Lord Chamberlain, assisted by his friend Mr. Delpini, of the Haymarket Theatre, whom his lordship had sent for to serve as a guide to his inexperience in such matters, are assigned to Sir Cecil Wray, a not very literary M.P., the established butt of the Whig wits of those days—('the words by Sir Cecil Wray, Bart., the spelling by Mr. Grojan, attorney-at-law,' is the title); to Lord Mulgrave, a member of the new administration, and the author of a 'Voyage to the North Pole,' as well as of various fugitive pieces in not the soberest verse; to Sir Joseph Mawbey, another ministerial M.P., who appears to have dealt, not in poetry, but in pigs; to Sir Richard Hill, the methodistical baronet, brother of Rowland, the well-known preacher, and said to be given to the same kind of pious jocularly in his speeches with which Rowland used to enliven his sermons; to James Macpherson, the translator or author of 'Ossian,' who was also at this time a member of the House of Commons (sitting as one of the representatives of the Nabob of Arcot); to Mason, the poet; to the Attorney-General, R. T. Arden (afterwards Lord Alvanley); to Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, already famous for having run over all the countries of the world, and learned nothing but their names; to Sir Gregory P^r

Turner, another loyal baronet and M.P.; to Michael Angelo Taylor, M.P.; to Major John Scott, Warren Hastings's chief agent and champion in the House of Commons; to Harry Dundas (in Scotch); to Dr. Joseph Warton, "in humble imitation of Brother Thomas;" to Viscount Mountmorres (in Hibernian English); to the Lord Chancellor Thurlow; to the Rev. Dr. Prettyman (Pitt's tutor, afterwards Bishop of Winchester), the prose notes to whose irregular strains, "except those wherein Latin is concerned," are stated to be by John Robinson, Esq.—the notorious "Jack Robinson," in popular repute the well-rewarded and unscrupulous doer of all work for all administrations; to the Marquess of Graham (the late Duke of Montrose); to Lord Mountmorres (a second attempt, in English); to Sir George Howard, K.B. (afterwards Field Marshal); to Dr. Markham, Archbishop of York; and to Warton himself, the successful candidate. The 'Probationary Odes' proceeded from the same manufactory as the 'Rolliad;' and they are at least equally spirited and successful. Indeed, the humour, we should say, is richer as well as brighter and freer in its flow, an effect owing partly perhaps to the form of the composition, which is not so solemn and rigid, but somewhat also, probably, to the writers being in a kindlier mood, and less disposed to give pain to the objects of their satire. Except in a small collection of 'Political Miscellanies', in the same style, which appeared shortly afterwards, the muse of the 'Rolliad' and the 'Probationary Odes' was, as far as is known, heard no more; but another mocking spirit, not to be so soon silenced, was already in the air, and beginning to "syl-

lable men's names" in a very peculiar accent, at once singularly comic and biting. Dr. John Wolcot, formerly a preacher to a congregation of negroes in Jamaica, now settled in London as a physician, made his first appearance as Peter Pindar in his 'Lyric Odes (fifteen in number) to the Royal Academicians for 1782.' The original style and manner of these compositions, coarse and careless enough, but full of drollery and pungency, seems to have taken the public fancy at once. Some attention also their author would have had a right to, had it been merely for the soundness of some of his remarks, and his evident knowledge of his subject; for Wolcot, who when practising medicine at Truro had discovered and encouraged the genius of John Opie, then a working carpenter in that neighbourhood, had a true as well as cultivated feeling for art. But, although the truth or good sense of his criticism may have done something at first to bring him into notice, it was to attractions of another sort that he owed his popularity. He confined himself to his friends the Academicians, to whom he addressed another set of odes in 1783, and a third set in 1785, till the latter year, when he came out with the first canto of his 'Lousiad,' the earliest of his lampoons expressly or entirely dedicated to the higher game which henceforward engaged his chief attention. The king, naturally falling in his way as the founder and patron of the Academy, had from the first come in for a side-blow now and then; but from this date their majesties became the main butts of his ridicule, and it was only when no fresh scandal or lie suited for his purpose was afloat about the doings at St. James's or Kew, that he wasted his time on anything else. S-

a thorn in the side of the royal family did he make himself, that a negociation, it is said, was at one time entered into to purchase his silence. There can be no doubt, indeed, that his daring and incessant derision proved materially injurious to the popularity of the king and queen. Their unscrupulous assailant took all sorts of advantages, fair and unfair, and his ludicrous delineations are certainly no materials for history ; but as a caricaturist in rhyme he must be placed very high. His manner, as we have observed, is quite original and his own, however much it may have been imitated since by others. His mere wit is not very pointed ; but nobody tells a story better, or brings out the farce of a scene with more breadth and effect. Much of what he has left is hastily executed and worth very little ; some of his attempts were not suited to the nature of his powers ; much of what made people laugh heartily in his own day has lost its interest with the topics to which it relates ; but it may safely be predicted that some of his comic tales, and other things which he has done best, and which have least of a mere temporary reference, will live in the language and retain their popularity. Wolcot survived till 1819 ; but, although he continued to write and publish till within a few years of his death (producing, among other things, a tragedy, 'The Fall of Portugal,' which appeared without his name in 1808), all his most memorable effusions belong to the first eighteen or twenty years of his authorship. His proper successor, who may be regarded in the main as his imitator or disciple, was the late George Colman the Younger (as he persisted in calling himself so long as he lived) ; but it has not been generally noticed that

from Wolcot Byron also has evidently caught part of the inspiration of his *Don Juan*—not of its golden poetry, of course, but of the fluent drollery and quaintness of its less elevated passages. Even there it is Wolcot refined and heightened; but still the spirit and manner are essentially the same. Compare, for instance, the harangue of Julia to her husband and his intruding myrmidons, in the first canto of ‘*Don Juan*,’ with the Petition of the Cooks in the second canto of the ‘*Lousiad*.’

OTHER POETICAL WRITERS OF THE LATTER PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Of a number of other poetical writers, or verse-makers of the latter part of the last century, very little need be said. The celebrated Sir William Jones—the Admirable Crichton of his day—published the first of his poems, consisting mostly of translations from the Asiatic languages, in 1772, in his twenty-sixth year; and he afterwards produced, from time to time, other similar translations, and also some original compositions in verse. He died, in the midst of a career of intellectual conquest which promised to embrace the whole compass of human learning, in 1794. The poetry of Sir William Jones is very sonorous and imposing; and in his happiest efforts there is not wanting nobleness of thought, or glow of passion, as well as pomp of words. He cannot, however, be called a poet of an original genius; any peculiarity of inspiration that may seem to distinguish some of his compositions is for the most part only the Orientalism of the subject, and of the figures and images. He is a brilliant translator and imitator rather than a poet in any higher sense. We cannot say even so much

some other verse-writers of this age, once of great note. Henry James Pye, who died Poet Laureate and a police magistrate in 1813 (having succeeded to the former office in 1790 on the death of Thomas Warton), had in his time discharged upon the unresisting public torrents of 'Progress of Refinement,' 'Shooting, a Poem,' 'Amusement, a Poetical Essay,' 'Alfred,' 'Faringdom Hill,' 'The Aristocrat,' 'The Democrat,' and other ditch-water of the same sort, which the thirsty earth has long since drunk up. Not less unweariedly productive was Hayley, the friend and biographer of Cowper, with his 'Triumphs of Temper,' 'Triumphs of Music,' poetical epistles, elegies, odes, rhyming essays, plays, &c., which had accumulated to a mass of six octavo volumes so early as 1785, and to which much more forgotten verse was afterwards added—besides his Lives of Cowper and Milton, a prose three volume 'Essay on Old Maids,' a novel of similar extent, &c. &c. William Hayley lived till 1820. With his prose poetry may be classed the several wooden poetical perpetrations of the late learned Richard Payne Knight—'The Landscape,' published in 1794; 'The Progress of Civil Society,' in 1796; 'The Romance of Alfred,' many years after. Mr. Knight died in 1824. Here may be also properly enumerated Cumberland's worthless epics of 'Calvary,' 'Richard the First,' 'The Exodiad' (the two latter written in conjunction with Sir James Bland Burges, and the last not published till 1807-8). Cumberland's comedies have been already noticed. Another popular poet, and voluminous writer both in verse and prose, of this age was Samuel Jackson Pratt—originally a strolling player, next an itinerant lecturer, finally a Bath bookseller—who, after beginning

his literary career as a writer of novels under the designation of Courtney Melmoth, Esq., produced certain long poems, in a style of singularly mawkish sentimentality and empty affectation—‘Sympathy,’ ‘Humanity,’ and sundry others, with which humanity has long ceased to sympathise. Pratt, however, was quite the rage for a time—though his existence had been generally forgotten for a good many years before its earthly close in 1814. Here, too, may be mentioned the Rev. Percival Stockdale, whose first poetical effusion, ‘Churchill Defended,’ dates so far back as 1765, and who continued scribbling and publishing down nearly to his death, in 1811; but all whose literary labours have passed into utter oblivion, except only his *Memoirs of his own Life*, published in two octavo volumes in 1809, which is a work that the world will not willingly let die, and to have written which is, of itself, not to have lived in vain. Poor Stockdale’s pleasant delusion was merely, that, being one of the smallest men of his time, or of any time, he imagined himself to be one of the greatest—and his autobiography is his exposition and defence of this faith, written with an intense serenity of conviction which the most confirmed believers in any thing else whatever might envy.

Mrs. Charlotte Smith, better known as a novelist, made her first appearance as an author, at the age of twenty-five, by the publication, at Chichester, in 1784, of a series of ‘Elegiac Sonnets,’ in which there was at least considerable poetic promise. Miss Brooke, daughter of Henry Brooke, the author of ‘*The Fool of Quality*,’ published in 1790 her ‘*Reliques of Irish Poetry translated into English Verse*,’ which is chiefly deserving of notice as having called some attention to

neglected and interesting department of ancient national literature. Hannah More had produced her first work, 'The Search after Happiness, a Pastoral Drama,' in 1773, her two ballads, or 'Poetical Tales,' as she called them, of 'Sir Eldred of the Bower,' and the 'Bleeding Rock,' the following year, and several more poems, as well as sundry tragedies and other dramatic pieces, in the course of the next ten years; and she maintained her reputation as a correct, sensible, and highly moral writer of verse by her 'Florio' and 'The Bas Bleu,' published in 1786; and her poem entitled 'Slavery,' which appeared, in a quarto volume, two years later. Joanna Baillie, still preserved to us, assumed at once her much more eminent place as a poetess, by the first volume of her 'Plays illustrative of the Passions,' which was given to the world in 1798. The late William Sotheby, besides a volume of poems published in 1794, added to our literature in 1798 his elegant version of Wieland's 'Oberon,' the work by which his name is perhaps most likely to be preserved, although he continued to write verse down almost to his death in 1833. But perhaps the two most important poetical publications which have not been noticed, at least in their effects, if not in themselves, were the 'Fourteen Sonnets' by the Rev. Lisle Bowles, who also still lives, printed at Bath in 1780; and the 'Tales of Wonder,' by Matthew Gregory Lewis (already of literary notoriety as the author of the novel of 'The Monk,' published in 1795), which came out, in two volumes, in 1801. Mr. Bowles, whose later works have amply sustained his reputation as a true poet, has the glory of having by his first verses given an impulse and an inspiration to the genius of

Coleridge, who in his 'Biographia Literaria' has related how the spirit of poetry that was in him was awakened into activity by these sonnets. Lewis, again, and his 'Tales of Wonder,' gave in like manner example and excitement to Scott, who had indeed already published his first rhymes, partly translated, partly original, in 1796, and also his prose version of Goethe's 'Goetz of Berlichingen,' in 1799, but had not yet given any promise of what he was destined to become. Coleridge published his forgotten drama of 'The Fall of Robespierre,' in 1794, and a volume of Poems in 1796; Wordsworth, his Epistle in verse entitled, 'An Evening Walk,' and also his 'Descriptive Sketches during a Tour in the Alps,' in 1793, and the first edition of his 'Lyrical Ballads,' in 1798; Southey, his 'Joan of Arc,' in 1796, and a volume of Poems in 1797; but these writers all nevertheless belong properly to the present century, in which their principal works were produced, as well as Scott and Crabbe, and Thomas Moore, whose first publication, his 'Odes of Anacreon,' appeared in 1800; Thomas Campbell, whose 'Pleasures of Hope' first appeared in 1799; Walter Savage Landor, whose first published poetry dates so far back as 1795; and Samuel Rogers, whose first poetry came out in 1786, and his 'Pleasures of Memory' in 1792.

BURNS.

In October or November of the same year 1786, in which Rogers, still among us, first made his name known to English readers by 'An Ode to Superstition, with other Poems,' printed at London, in the fashion

quarto size of the day, the press of the obscure country town of Kilmarnock, in Scotland, gave to the world, in an octavo volume, the first edition of the 'Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect,' of Robert Burns. A second edition was printed at Edinburgh early in the following year. Burns, born on the 25th of January, 1759, had composed most of the pieces contained in this publication in the two years preceding its appearance: his life—an April day of sunshine and storm—closed on the 21st of July, 1796; and in his last nine or ten years he may have about doubled the original quantity of his printed poetry. He was not quite thirty-seven and a half years old when he died—about a year and three months older than Byron. Burns is the greatest peasant-poet that has ever appeared; but his poetry is so remarkable in itself that the circumstances in which it was produced hardly add anything to our admiration. It is a poetry of very limited compass—not ascending towards any "highest heaven of invention," nor even having much variety of modulation, but yet in its few notes as true and melodious a voice of passion as was ever heard. It is all light and fire. Considering how little the dialect in which he wrote had been trained to the purposes of literature, what Burns has done with it is miraculous. Nothing in Horace, in the way of curious felicity of phrase, excels what we find in the compositions of this Ayrshire ploughman. The words are almost always so apt and full of life, at once so natural and expressive, and so graceful and musical in their animated simplicity, that, were the matter ever so trivial, they would of themselves turn it into poetry. And the same native artistic feeling manifests itself in everything else. One characteristic, that

belongs to whatever Burns has written is that, of its kind or in its own way, it is a perfect production. It is perfect in the same sense in which every production of nature is perfect, the humblest weed as well as the proudest flower; and in which, indeed, every true thing whatever is perfect, viewed in reference to its species and purpose. His poetry is, throughout, real emotion melodiously uttered. As such, it is as genuine poetry as was ever written or sung. Not, however, although its chief and best inspiration is passion rather than imagination, that any poetry ever was farther from being a mere *Æolian* warble addressing itself principally to the nerves. Burns's head was as strong as his heart; his natural sagacity, logical faculty, and judgment were of the first order; no man, of poetical or prosaic temperament, ever had a more substantial intellectual character. And the character of his poetry is like that of the mind and the nature out of which it sprung—instinct with passion, but not less so with power of thought—full of light, as we have said, as well as of fire. More of matter and meaning, in short, in any sense in which the terms may be understood, is in no verses than there is in his. Hence the popularity of the poetry of Burns with all classes of his countrymen—a popularity more universal, probably, than any other writer ever gained, at least so immediately; for his name, we apprehend, had become a household word among all classes in every part of Scotland even in his own lifetime. Certainly at the present day, unless we are possibly to except some of the more secluded and half-savage dribblets of the population, recent reports of whose moral and intellectual condition have made it doubtful if they always know their own

names, that would be a curious Lowland Scotchman, or Scotchwoman either, who should be found never to have heard of the name and fame of Robert Burns, or even to be altogether ignorant of his works. It has happened, however, from this cause, that he is not, perhaps, in general, estimated by the best of his productions. Nobody, of course, capable of appreciating any of the characteristic qualities of Burns's poetry will ever think of quoting even the best of the few verses he has written in English, as evidence of his poetic genius. In these he is Samson shorn of his hair, and become as any other man. But even such poems as his 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' and his tale of 'Tam o' Shanter,' convey no adequate conception of what is brightest and highest in his poetry. The former is a true and touching description in a quiet and subdued manner, suitable to the subject, but not adapted to bring out much of his illuminating fancy and fusing power of passion: the other is a rapid, animated, and most effective piece of narrative, with some vigorous comedy, and also some scene-painting in a broad, dashing style, but exhibiting hardly more of the peculiar humour of Burns than of his pathos. Of a far rarer merit, much richer in true poetic light and colour, and of a much more original and distinctive inspiration, are many of his poems which are much less generally referred to, at least out of his own country. Take, for instance, that entitled 'To a Mouse, on turning her up in her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785 :—

Wee,^a sleekit,^b cow'rin,^c timorous beastie,^d
O what a panic's in thy breastie!^d

^a Little.

^b Sly.

^c Cowering.

^d Diminutives of "beast," and "breast."

Thou need na° start awa' sae hastie,
 Wi' bickerin' brattle !^s
 I wad be laith^h to rin' an' chase thee,
 Wi' murderin' pattie.^k

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
 Has broken nature's social union,
 An' justifies that ill opinion
 Which makes thee startle
 At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
 An' fellow mortal.

I doubt na, whiles,^l but thou may thieve;
 What then? Poor beastie, thou maun^m live!
 A daimen ickerⁿ in a thrave°
 'S a sma'° request :
 I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,^o
 An' never miss 't.

Thy wee bit housie,^p too, in ruin !
 Its silly wa's the win's are strewin' !^q
 An' naething, now, to big a new ane,^r
 O' foggageⁿ green !
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
 Baith snell^v and keen !

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
 An' weary winter comin' fast;
 An' cozie^w here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell ;
 Till crash ! the cruel coulter passed
 Out through thy cell.

° Not. ' Away. s With scudding fury.

^h Would (should) be loth. ⁱ Run.

^k With murderous ploughstaff. ^l Sometimes.

^m Must. ⁿ An occasional ear of corn.

° A double shock. ^p Is a small. ^q Remainder.

^r Triple diminutive of "house"—untranslatable into English. ^s Its weak walls the winds are strewing.

^t Nothing now to build a new one.

^u Moss. ^v Biting. ^w Snug.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble^x
 Has cost thee monie^y a weary nibble!
 Now thou's^z turned out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,^a
 To thole^b the winter's sleety dribble;
 An' cranreuch cald.^c

But, Mousie,^d thou art no thy lane^e
 In proving foresight may be vain:
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft a-gley,^f
 An' leave us nought but grief and pain,
 For promised joy.

Still thou art blest compared wi' me!
 The present only toucheth thee:
 But och!^g I backward cast my ee^h
 On prospects drear;
 An' forward, though I cannaⁱ see,
 I guess an' fear.

A simple and common incident poetically conceived has never been rendered into expression more natural, delicately graceful, and true. Of course, however, our glossarial interpretations can convey but a very insufficient notion of the aptness of the poet's language to those to whom the Scottish dialect is not familiar. Such a phrase as "bickering brattle," for instance, is not to be translated. The epithet "bickering" implies that sharp, explosive, fluttering violence, or impetuosity, which belongs to any sudden and rapid progressive movement of short continuance, and it expresses the noise as well as the speed. It is no doubt the same word with the

^x Very small quantity of leaves and stubble.

^y Many. ^z Thou is (art).

^a Without house or hold. ^b Endure.

^c Hoar-frost cold. ^d Diminutive of "mouse."

^e Not alone. ^f Go oft awry. ^g Ah.

Eye.

ⁱ Cannot.

old English "bickering," but used in a more extensive sense: a "bicker" means commonly a short irregular fight, or skirmish; but Milton has "bickering flame," where, although the commentators interpret the epithet as equivalent to *quivering*, we apprehend it includes the idea of *crackling* also. Darwin has borrowed the phrase, as may be seen in one of our extracts given above. Nor is it possible to give the effect of the diminutives, in which the Scottish language is almost as rich as the Italian. While the English, for example, has only its *manikin*, the Scotch has its *mannie*, *mannikie*, *bit mannie*, *bit mannikie*, *wee bit mannie*, *wee bit mannikie*, *little wee bit mannie*, *little wee bit mannikie*; and so with *wife*, *wifie*, *wifikie*, and many other terms. Almost every substantive noun has at least one diminutive form, made by the affix *ie*, as *mousie*, *housie*. We ought to notice also, that the established or customary spelling in these and other instances does not correctly represent the pronunciation:—the vowel sound is the soft one usually indicated by *oo*; as if the words were written *moosie*, *hoosie*, *coorin*, &c. It is an advantage that the Scottish dialect possesses, somewhat akin to that possessed by the Greek in the time of Homer, that, from having been comparatively but little employed in literary composition, and only imperfectly reduced under the dominion of grammar, many of its words have several forms, which are not only convenient for the exigencies of verse, but are used with different effects or shades of meaning. In particular, the English form is always available when wanted; and it is the writer's natural resource when he would rise from the light or familiar style to one of greater elevation or earnestness. Thus, in the above verses, while expres

only half playful tenderness and commiseration, Burns writes "Now thou 's turned out" (pronounce *oot*), in his native dialect; but it is in the regular English form, "Still thou art blest," that he gives utterance to the deeper pathos and solemnity of the concluding verse.

The proper companion to this short poem is that addressed 'To a Mountain Daisy, on turning one down with the Plough, in April, 1786;' but in that the execution is not so pure throughout, and the latter part runs somewhat into commonplace. The beginning, however, is in the poet's happiest manner:—

Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
 Thou's^a met me in an evil hour;
 For I maun crush amang the stour^b
 Thy tender stem;
 To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
 Thou bonnie^c gem.

Alas! its no^d thy neebor^e sweet,
 The bonnie lark, companion meet!
 Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet'
 Wi' spreckled^f breast,
 When upward springing, blythe to greet
 The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
 Upon thy early, humble, birth;
 Yet cheerfully thou glinted^h forth
 Amid the storm,
 Scarce reared above the parent earth
 Thy tender form.

^a Thou hast.

^b Dust (pronounce *floor, hoor, stoor, poor*).

^c Lovely.

^d Not.

^e Neighbour.

^f Wet.

^g Speckled.

Peeped, or rather glanced (glanced'st).

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield
 High sheltering woods and wa's maun¹ shield;
 But thou beneath the random bield^m

O' clod or staneⁿ,
 Adorns the histie^o stibble-field,
 Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
 Thy snawy^p bosom sun-ward spread,
 Thou lifts thy unassuming head

In humble guise;
 But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
 Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
 By love's simplicity betrayed,
 And guileless trust,
 Till she, like thee, all soiled is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
 On life's rough ocean luckless-starred!
 Unskilful he to note the card

Of prudent lore,
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
 Who long with wants and woes has striven,
 By human pride or cunning driven

To misery's brink,
 Till, wrenched of every stay but heaven,
 He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
 That fate is thine—no distant date;
 Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,

Full on thy bloom,
 Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
 Shall be thy doom!

¹ Walls must.
^o Dry and rugged.

^m Shelter.

^p Snowy.

ⁿ Stone.

In a different style, and of another mood, but still in the strong rush of its comic and satiric eloquence, and the hurry of its whimsical fancies, not without occasional touches both of the terrific and the tender, is the glorious 'Address to the Deil' (the Devil):—

O Thou! whatever title suit thee,
Auld^a Hornie,^b Satan, Nick, or Clootie,^c
Wha,^d in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges^e about the brunstane^f cootie^g
To scand^h poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangieⁱ, for a wee,^k
And let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,^l
E'en to a deil,
To skelp^m and scand poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy power, an' great thy fame;
Far-kennedⁿ and noted is thy name;
An', though you lowin' heugh's thy hame,^o
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate^p nor scaur.^q

Whiles,^r rangin' like a roarin' lion,
For prey a's holes an' corners tryin';
Whiles on the strong-winged tempest flyin',
Tirling^t the kirks;
Whiles in the human bosom pryin'
Unseen thou lurks.

^a Old.

^b A popular name of the devil, in allusion to his horns.

^c Another, in allusion to his *cloots*, or hoofs.

^d Who.

^e Dashes.

^f Brimstone.

^g A wooden bowl.

^h Scald.

ⁱ Hangman.

^k For a little.

^l Give.

^m Slap severely.

ⁿ Far-known.

^o Though yonder blazing coal-pit is thy home.

^p Bashful.

^q Apt to be scared.

^r Sometimes.

^s All. ^t Unroofing.

I've heard my reverend Grannie^a say
 In lanely glens^v ye like to stray ;
 Or, where all ruined castles grey
 Nod to the moon,
 Ye fright the nightly wanderer's way
 Wi' eldritch croon.^w

When twilight did my Grannie summon
 To say her prayers, dounce,^x honest woman,
 Aft yont^y the dyke^z she's heard ye bummin',^a
 Wi' eerie^b drone;
 Or, rustlin', through the hoortrees^c comin',
 Wi' heavy groan.

Ae^d dreary, windy, winter night,
 The stars shot down wi' sklentint^e light,
 Wi' you, mysel,^f I gat^g a fright,
 Ayont^h the lough ;ⁱ
 Ye like a rash-bush^k stood in sight,
 Wi' waving sugh.^l

The cudgel in my nieve^m did shake,
 Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
 When wi' an eldritch, stour,ⁿ quaik, quaik,
 Amang the springs
 Awa' ye squattered,^o like a drake,
 On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' withered hags,
 Tell how wi' you on ragweed^p nags

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ^a Grandmother. | ^v Lonely dales. |
| ^w With unearthly moan (the oo in noon and croon pronounced like the French u.) | |
| ^x Quiet, sedate. | ^y Often beyond. |
| ^z Stone wall of a field. | |
| ^a Humming. | ^b Ghastly, unearthly. |
| ^c Whortleberry bushes. | ^d One. |
| ^f Myself. | ^e Slanting. |
| ^g Got. | ^h Beyond. |
| ^k Bush of rushes. | ⁱ Lake. |
| ^m Fist. | ^l Long sighing sound. |
| ⁿ Stern and hollow. | |
| ^o Away you fluttered in water. | ^p Ragwort |
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They skim the muirs^a and dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed;
 And in kirk-yards^r renew their leagues
 Ower^s howkit^t dead.

Thence kintra^a wives, wi' toil an' pain,
 May plunge an' plunge the kirk^r in vain;
 For oh! the yellow treasure's ta'en
 By witching skill;
 An' dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie's gane
 As yell's the bill.^w

When throwes^x dissolve the snawy hoord,^y
 An' float the jinglin' icy boord,^z
 Then water-kelpies^a haunt the foord^b
 By your direction,
 An' nighted travellers are allured
 To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies^c
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is;
 The bleezin',^d curst, mischievous monkeys
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is
 Ne'er mair^e to rise.

When Masons' mystic word an' grip^f
 In storms an' tempests raise you up,
 Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
 Or, strange to tell!
 The youngest Brother ye wad whip
 Aff straights^g to hell!

^a Moors.^r Churchyards.^s Over.^t Dug up, disinterred.^u Country.^v Churn.^w And fondly cherished, twelve-pint Hawkie (the cow) is gone as barren of milk as the bull.^x Thaws.^y Hoard, heap.^z Board.^a Mischievous water spirits.^b Ford.^c Will o' the Wisps.^d Blazing.^e Never more.^f Grip, clasp of the hand.^g Off straight.

Lang syne,^b in Eden's bonnie yard,ⁱ
 When youthfu' lovers first were paired,
 An' all the soul of love they shared

The raptur'd hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant, flowery swaird,^k
 In shady bow'r;

Then you, ye auld sneck-drawin' dog!^l
 Ye came to Paradise incog,

An' played on man a curs'd brogue^m
 (Black be your fa'!)ⁿ

An' gied the infant warld a shog,^o
 Maist ruin'd a'.^p

D'ye mind that day when in a bizz,^q

Wi' reekit duds,^r and reested gizz,^s

Ye did present your smoutie' phiz,

'Mang better folk,

An' sklentit^a on the Man of Uzz

Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,

An' brak him^v out o' house an' hall,

While scabs an' blotches did him gall

Wi' bitter claw,

An' lous'd^w his ill-tongued wicked scawl,^x

Was warst ava'?^y

But a' your doings to rehearse,

Your wily snares an' fechtin'^z fierce,

Sin^a that day Michael did ye pierce,

Down to this time,

Wad ding a' Lallan tongue or Erse^b

In prose or rhyme.

^b Long since.

ⁱ Garden.

^k Sward.

^l Crafty, bolt-drawing.

^m Trick.

ⁿ Fate, what befalls you.

^o Gave the infant world a push to the side.

^p That almost ruined all.

^q Buzz.

^r Smoked clothes.

^s Singed periwig.

^t Smutty.

^a Made to fall obliquely.

^v Broke him—made him bankrupt.

^w Let loose.

^x Scold.

^y Which was worse of all.

^z Fighting.

^a Since.

^b Would beat all Lowland tongue or Erse (Gaelic).

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye' re thinkin'
 A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
 Some luckless hour will send him linkin'^c
 To your black pit;
 But faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin'^d
 An' cheat you yet.

But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!^e
 O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!^f
 Ye aiblins^g might—I dinna ken^h—
 Still ha'e a stake:—
 I'm waeⁱ to think upo^k yon den,
 E'en for your sake!

The same brilliant comic power animates the pieces entitled *Scotch Drink*, *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, the *Holy Fair*, the *Ordination*, and others of his more irreverent or reckless effusions. There is infinite spirit also in the little operatic sketch, or cantata, as it is called, of the *Jolly Beggars*, together with the happiest skill in painting character and manners by a few vigorous touches. As a picture of manners, however, his *Hallowe'en* is Burns's greatest performance—with its easy vigour, its execution absolutely perfect, its fulness of various and busy life, the truth and reality throughout, the humour diffused over it like sunshine, and ever and anon flashing forth in changeful or more dazzling light, the exquisite feeling and rendering both of the whole human spirit of the scene, and also of its accessories in what we cannot call or conceive of as inanimate nature while reading such lines as the following:—

- ^c Tripping along. ^d Dodging. ^e Old Nick.
^f O would you take a thought and mend!
^g Possibly. ^h I do not know.
ⁱ Sorrowful. ^k Upon.

Whiles^a ow'r^b a linn^c the burnie^d plays,
 As through the glen^e it wimpled;^f
 Whiles round a rocky scar^g it strays;
 Whiles in a wiel^h it dimpled;
 Whiles glittered to the nightly rays,
 Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
 Whiles cookit,ⁱ underneath the braes,
 Below the spreading hazel.

But this poem is too long for quotation, and is besides well known to every reader who knows anything of Burns. We will give rather one or two shorter pieces that may serve to illustrate another quality of the man and of his poetry — the admirable sagacity and good sense, never separated from manliness and a high spirit, that made so large a part of his large heart and understanding. All the more considerate nature of Burns speaks in the following 'Epistle to a Young Friend,' dated May, 1786:—

I lang hae^a thought, my youthfu' friend,
 A something to have sent you,
 Though it should serve nae^b other end
 Than just a kind memento;
 But how the subject-theme may gang,
 Let time and chance determine;
 Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
 Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
 And, Andrew dear, believe me,
 Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,^c
 And muckle^d they may grieve ye:

^a Sometimes.

^b Over.

^c Waterfall.

^d Rivulet.

^e Dale.

^f Nimbly meandered.

^g Cliff.

^h Small whirlpool.

ⁱ Slyly disappeared by dipping down. [Dr. Currie interprets it, "appeared and disappeared by fits."]

^a Long have.

^b No.

^c Strange crew.

^d Much.

For care and trouble set your thought,
 Ev'n when your end's attained ;
 And a^o your views may come to nought,
 Where every nerve is strained.

I'll no^t say men are villains a^t ;
 The real, hardened wicked,
 Wha hae nae^s check but human law,
 Are to a few restricked ;^h
 But oh ! mankind are unco^l weak,
 An' little to be trusted ;
 If *self* the wavering balance shake,
 It's rarely right adjusted !

Yet they wha fa^k in fortune's strife,
 Their fate we should na^l censure ;
 For still the important *end* of life
 They equally may answer :
 A man may hae an honest heart,
 Though poortith^m hourly stare him ;
 A man may takⁿ a neebor's^o part,
 Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free aff han^p your story tell,
 When wi' a bosom^c crony ;^a
 But still keep something to yoursel^r
 You scarcely tell to ony.^s
 Conceal yoursel as weel's^t ye can
 Fraeⁿ critical dissection ;
 But keek^v through every other man
 Wi' sharpened, slee^w inspection.

The sacred lowe^x o' weel-placed love,
 Luxuriantly indulge it ;
 But never tempt the illicit rove,
 Though naething should divulge it :

• All.

^r Not.

^s Who have no.

^h Restricted.

ⁱ Very, strangely.

^k Who fall.

^l Not.

^m Poverty.

ⁿ Take.

^o Neighbour's.

^p Off-hand.

^q Intimate associate.

^r Yourself.

^s Any.

^t As well as.

^u From.

^v Look slyly.

^w Sly. ^x Flame.

I wave the quantum o' the sin,
 The hazard of concealing ;
 But oh ! it hardens a' within,
 And petrifies the feeling !

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
 Assiduous wait upon her ;
 And gather gear by every wile
 That's justified by honour ;
 Not for to hide it in a hedge,
 Not for a train attendant ;
 But for the glorious privilege
 Of being independent.

The fear o' hell 's a hangman's whip
 To haud' the wretch in order ;
 But where ye feel your *honour* grip,
 Let that aye be your border ;
 Its slightest touches—instant pause ;
 Debar a' side pretences ;
 And resolutely keep its laws,
 Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere
 Must sure become the creature ;
 But still the preaching cant forbear,
 And even the rigid feature :
 Yet ne'er with wits profane to range
 Be complaisance extended ;
 An Atheist's laugh 's a poor exchange
 For Deity offended.

When ranting round in pleasure's ring
 Religion may be blinded ;
 Or, if she gie² a random sting,
 It may be little minded ;
 But when on life we 're tempest-driven—
 A conscience but a canker—
 A correspondence fixed wi' heaven
 Is sure a noble anchor.

’ Hold.

² Give.

Adieu, dear, amiable youth !
 Your heart can ne'er be wanting ;
 May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
 Erect your brow undaunting !
 In ploughman phrase, ' God send you speed,'
 Still daily to grow wiser ;
 And may you better reckon the rede^a
 Than ever did the adviser.

This poem, it will be observed, is for the greater part in English ; and it is not throughout written with all the purity of diction which Burns never violates in his native dialect. For instance, in the fourth stanza the word "censure" is used to suit the exigencies of the rhyme, where the sense demands some such term as deplore or regret ; for, although we might censure the man himself who fails to succeed in life (which, however, is not the idea here), we do not censure, that is blame or condemn, his fate ; we can only lament it ; if we censure anything, it is his conduct. Again, in the same stanza, the expression "stare him" is, we apprehend, neither English nor Scotch : usage authorizes us to speak of poverty staring a man in the face, but not of it staring him, absolutely. Again, in the tenth stanza, we have "Religion may be blinded" for may be blinked, disregarded, or looked at as with shut eyes. We notice these things, to prevent an impression being left with the English reader that they are characteristic of Burns. No such vices of style, we repeat, are to be found in his Scotch, where the diction is uniformly as natural and correct as it is appropriate and expressive.

^a Heed the counsel. The expression is Shakspeare's in Hamlet :—

"Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own read."

Our next extract shall be a portion of his 'Epistle to Davie [David Sillar], a Brother Poet,' in which we have something of the same strain of sentiment, with a manner, however, more fervid or impetuous:—

While winds frae aff^a Ben Lomond blaw^b
 And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,^c
 And hing^d us ow'r the ingle,^e
 I set me down to pass the time,
 And spin a verse or twa' o' rhyme
 In hamely^f westlin^h jingle.
 While frosty winds blaw in the drift
 Benⁱ to the chimla^k lug,^l
 I grudge a wee^m the great folk's gift,
 That live sae bienⁿ an' snug
 I tent^o less and want less
 Their roomy fire-side;
 But hanker and canker
 To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's power
 To keep, at times, frae being sour,
 To see how things are shared;
 How best o' chieils^p are whiles in want,
 While coofs^q on countless thousands rant,
 And ken na how to wear 't;^r
 But, Davie lad, ne'er fash^s your head;
 Though we hae little gear,
 We're fit to win our daily bread
 As lang^t as we're hale and fier;^u
 Mair spier na,^v nor fear na;
 Auld^w age ne'er mind a feg;^x
 The last o't,^y the warst^z o't,
 Is only for to beg.

-
- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| ^a From off. | ^b Blow. | ^c Snow. |
| ^d Hang. | ^e Fire. | ^f Homely. |
| ^h Western. | ⁱ Into the sitting room [within, or be-in]. | ^g Little. |
| ^k Chimney. | ^l Ear, corner. | ^m Regard, mind. |
| ⁿ So well provided, comfortable. | ^o Fools. | ^p Spend it. |
| ^q Fellows. | ^r As long as. | ^s In sound health. |
| ^t Trouble. | ^u Old. | ^x Fig. |
| ^v More inquire not. | ^y Of it. | ^z Worst. |

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
 When banes^a are crazed and bluid^b is thin,
 Is, doubtless, great distress !
 Yet then content could make us blest ;
 Ev'n then sometimes we 'd snatch a taste
 Of truest happiness.
 The honest heart that 's free frae a'
 Intended fraud or guile,
 However fortune kick the ba',^c
 Has aye some cause to smile ;
 And mind still you 'll find still
 A comfort this, nae sma',^d
 Nae mair then we 'll care then,
 Nae farther can we fa'.^e

What though, like commoners of air,
 We wander out, we know not where,
 But either house or hall ?
 Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
 The sweeping vales and foaming floods,
 Are free alike to all.
 In days when daisies deck the ground,
 And blackbirds whistle clear,
 With honest joy our hearts will bound
 To see the coming year :
 On braes,^f when we please, then,
 We 'll sit an' sowth^g a tune ;
 Syne^h rhyme till 'tⁱ we 'll time till 't,
 And sing't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank,
 It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
 To purchase peace and rest ;
 It's no in makin' muckle mair,^k
 It's no in books, it's no in lear,^l
 To make us truly blest :
 If happiness hae not her seat
 And centre in the breast,
 We may be wise, or rich, or great,
 But never can be blest ;

^a Bones.^b Blood.^c Ball.^d Small.^e Fall.^f Banks, slopes.^g Whistle in a low tone.^h Then.ⁱ To it.^k In making much more.

Nae treasures nor pleasures
 Could make us happy lang;
 The heart aye's the part aye
 That makes us right or wrang.^m

Think ye that sic^a as you and I,
 Wha drudge and drive through wet and dry
 Wi' never-ceasing toil;
 Think ye, are we less blest than they
 Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
 As hardly worth their while?
 Alas! how aft in haughty mood
 God's creatures they oppress!
 Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
 They riot in excess!
 Baith^o careless and fearless
 Of either heaven or hell!
 Esteeming and deeming
 It's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce,
 Nor make our scanty pleasures less
 By pining at our state;
 And, even should misfortunes come,
 I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
 An's thankfu'^p for them yet.
 They gie the wit of age to youth;
 They let us ken oursel;^q
 They make us see the naked truth,
 The *real* guid and ill.
 Though losses and crosses
 Be lessons right severe,
 There's wit there, ye'll get there,
 Ye'll find nae other where.

Still more animated is his 'Answer to the Guid Wife
 [Mistress] of Wauchope House,' written in March, 1787,
 of which this is the commencement:—

^m Wrong.^a Such.^o Both.^p And is [am] thankful.^q Know ourself.

I mind it weel,^a in early date,
 When I was beardless, young, and blate,^b
 An' first could thresh the barn,^c
 Or haud a yokin' on the pleugh,^d
 An', though forfoughten sair eneugh,^e
 Yet unco' proud to learn;
 When first amang the yellow corn
 A man I reckoned was,
 And wi' the laves ilk^h merry morn
 Could rank my rigⁱ and lass;
 Still shearing,^k and clearing
 The tither stookit raw,^l
 Wi' claivers an' haivers^m
 Wearing the day awa';—

E'en then a wish (I mind its pow'r),
 A wish that to my latest hour
 Shall strongly heave my breast,
 That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
 Some usefu' plan or book could make,
 Or sing a sangⁿ at least.
 The rough bur-thistle, spreading wide
 Among the bearded bear,^o—
 I turned my weeding-heuk^p aside,
 An' spared the symbol dear.
 No nation, no station,
 My envy e'er could raise;
 A Scot still, but^q blot still,
 I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang,
 In formless jumble, right an' wrang,
 Wild flow'd in my brain;

^a I remember it well.

^b Modest, bashful.

^c Thrash the corn on the barn floor.

^d Hold a yoking at the plough.

^e Fatigued sore enough.

^f Very.

^g With the rest.

^h Every.

ⁱ Take rank in respect to my ridge.

^k Reaping.

^l The tother row of shocks.

^m With idle stories and nonsense.

ⁿ Song.

^o Barley.

^p Weeding-hook.

^q Without.

Till, on that hairst^r I said before,
 My partner in the merry core,^a
 She roused the forming strain :
 I see her yet, the sonsie^t quean,
 That lighted up the jingle,
 Her witching smile, her pawky een,^a
 That gart^v my heartstrings tingle ;
 I fir-ed, inspir-ed,
 At every kindling keek,^v
 But, bashing and dashing,^x
 I fear-ed aye to speak.

But the most elevated and impassioned of the poems of this class is that entitled *The Vision*. It is too long to be quoted entire ; but its course will be understood from the following extracts :—

The sun had closed the winter day,
 The curlers quat^a their roaring play,
 An' hungered mawkin^b ta'en her way
 To kail-yards^a green,
 While faithless snaws^d ilk^a step betray
 Whare^t she has been.

The thresher's weary flingin' tree^s
 The lee-lang^h day had tired me ;
 And, whanⁱ the day had closed his e'e
 Far i' the west,
 Ben i' the spence,ⁱ right pensivelie,
 I gaed^m to rest.

There, lanely,^a by the ingle-cheek,^o
 I sat and eyed the spewing reek,^p

-
- ^r Harvest, or rather harvest-field. ^a Corps.
^t Good-looking, with some degree of *en-bon-point*.
^u Her cunning eyes. ^v Caused, made.
^w Sly look. ^x Feeling abashed and dashed.
^a Quitted. ^b The hare. ^c Colewort gardens.
^d Snows. ^e Every. ^f Where [pronounce *whar*.]
^g Flail. ^h Live-long. ⁱ When. ^k Eye.
^l Within in the sitting apartment. ^m Went.
ⁿ Lonely. ^o Fire-side. ^p Smoke issuing out.

That filled wi' hoast-provoking smee^a
 The auld clay biggin' ;^r
 An' heard the restless rattons^s squeak
 About the riggin'.^t

All in this mottie,^u misty clime,
 I backward mused on wasted time,
 How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
 An' done nae thing
 But stringin' blethers^v up in rhyme,
 For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,^w
 I might, by this,^x hae led a market,
 Or strutted in a bank an' clarkit^y
 My cash account :
 While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,^z
 Is a' the amount.

I started, muttering Blockhead ! coof !^a
 And heaved on high my waukit loof,^b
 To swear by a' yon starry roof,
 Or some rash aith,^c
 That I henceforth would be rhyme-proof
 Till my last breath—

When click ! the string the snick^d did draw ;
 And jee ! the door gaed to the wa' ;
 An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
 Now bleazin'^e bright,
 A tight, outlandish hizzie,^f braw,
 Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt I held my whisht ;^g
 The infant aith, half-formed, was crushed ;

^a Cough-provoking smoke.

^r The old clay building, or house.

^t The roof of the house.

^v Nonsense, idle words.

^x By this time.

^a Fool.

^c Oath.

^b My palm thickened with labour.

^d Latch.

^e Blazing.

^f Hussey.

^g Silence.

^s Rats.

^u Full of moths.

^w Hearkened.

^y Written.

^z Half-shirted.

I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dush'd^b
 In some wild glen;
 When sweet, like modest worth, she blushed
 And steppit ben.ⁱ

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly boughs
 Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
 I took her for some Scottish Muse
 By that same token;
 An' come to stop those reckless vows
 Would soon been^k broken.

A hair-brained, sentimental trace
 Was strongly mark-ed in her face;
 A wildly witty, rustic grace
 Shone full upon her;
 Her eye, even turned on empty space,
 Beamed keen with honour.

• • • • •
 With musing, deep, astonished stare,
 I viewed the heavenly-seeming fair;
 A whispering throb did witness bear
 Of kindred sweet:
 When, with an elder sister's air,
 She did me greet:—

“ All hail! my own inspired bard!
 In me thy native Muse regard!
 Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
 Thus poorly low!
 I come to give thee such reward
 As we bestow.

“ Know the great Genius of this land
 Has many a light aërial band,
 Who, all beneath his high command,
 Harmoniously,
 As arts or arms they understand,
 Their labours ply.

^b I stared as frightened as if I had been attacked by a butting ram.

ⁱ Walked into the room.

^k Which would soon have been.

- " Of these am I—Coila my name ;
 And this district as mine I claim,
 Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
 Held ruling power :—
 I marked thy embryo tuneful flame
 Thy natal hour.
- " With future hope I oft would gaze
 Fond on thy little early ways,
 Thy rudely carolled chiming phrase
 In uncouth rhymes,
 Fired at the simple, artless lays
 Of other times.
- " I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
 Delighted with the dashing roar ;
 Or, when the North his fleecy store
 Drove through the sky,
 I saw grim nature's visage hoar
 Struck thy young eye.
- " Or, when the deep-green-mantled earth
 Warm cherished every floweret's birth,
 And joy and music pouring forth
 In every grove,
 I saw thee eye the general mirth
 With boundless love.
- " When ripened fields and azure skies
 Called forth the reaper's rustling noise,
 I saw thee leave their evening joys,
 And lonely stalk
 To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
 In pensive walk.
- " When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
 Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
 Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
 The adored name,
 I taught thee how to pour in song
 To soothe thy flame.
- " I saw thy pulse's maddening play
 Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,

Misled by fancy's meteor ray,
 By passion driven ;
 But yet the light that led astray
 Was light from heaven.

.

“ To give my counsels all in one,
 Thy tuneful flame still careful fan ;
 Preserve the dignity of man
 With soul erect ;
 And trust the universal plan
 Will all protect.

“ And wear thou this ”—she solemn said,
 And bound the holly round my head :
 The polished leaves and berries red
 Did rustling play ;
 And, like a passing thought, she fled
 In light away.

Here again, in another style, is something, which, although not very poetical, is, we think, very striking. Burns himself has spoken of it as a “ wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification ; ” “ but,” it is added, “ as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over : ”—

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border, O ;
 And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O ;
 He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a far-
 thing, O ;
 For without an honest manly heart no man was worth re-
 garding, O.

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O,
 Though to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was
 charming, O ;
 My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education, O ;
 Resolved was I at least to try to mend my situation, O.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted fortune's favour, O;
Some cause unseen still stept between to frustrate each endeavour, O;
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpowered, sometimes by friends forsaken, O;
And when my hope was at the top I still was worst mistaken, O.

Then sore harassed, and tired at last, with fortune's vain delusion, O,
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion, O;—
The past was bad, the future hid—its good or ill untried, O;
But the present hour was in my power, and so I would enjoy it, O.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat and broil, and labour to sustain me, O:
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early, O;
For one, he said, to labour bred was a match for fortune fairly, O.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, through life I'm doomed to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber, O;
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow, O,

I live to day as well's I may, regardless of tomorrow, O.
But, cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in a palace, O,
Though fortune's frown still hunts me down with all her wonted malice, O:

I make indeed my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther, O;
But, as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her, O.

When sometimes by my labour I earn a little money, O,
Some unforeseen misfortune comes generally upon me, O;
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-natured folly, O;
But, come what will, I've sworn it still I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting
ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss you leave your views
the farther, O:
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you,
O,
A cheerful honest-hearted clown I will prefer before you, O.

These extracts, as extracts in every case must be, are only indications or hints of what is to be found in the body of poetry from which they are taken ; and in this instance, from various causes, the impression so conveyed may probably be more than usually inadequate—for the strangeness of the dialect must veil much of the effect to an English reader, even when the general sense is apprehended, and, besides, their length, their peculiarly Scottish spirit and character, and other considerations have prevented us from quoting the most successful of Burns's pieces in some of the styles in which he most excelled. But still what we have transcribed may serve to give a more extended and a truer notion of what his poetry really is than is commonly entertained by strangers, among whom he is mostly known and judged of from two or three of his compositions, which perhaps of all that he has produced are the least marked by the peculiar character of his genius. Even out of his own country, his Songs, to be sure, have taken all hearts—and they are the very flame-breath of his own. No truer poetry exists in any language, or in any form. But it is the poetry of the heart much more than of either the head or the imagination. Burns's songs do not at all resemble the exquisite lyrical snatches with which Shakspeare, and also Beaumont and Fletcher, have sprinkled some of their dramas—enlivening the bu

scene and progress of the action as the progress of the wayfarer is enlivened by the voices of birds in the hedgerows, or the sight and scent of wild-flowers that have sprung up by the road-side. They are never in any respect exercises of ingenuity, but always utterances of passion, and simple and direct as a shout of laughter or a gush of tears. Whatever they have of fancy, whatever they have of melody, is born of real emotion—is merely the natural expression of the poet's feeling at the moment, seeking and finding vent in musical words. Since "burning Sappho" loved and sung in the old isles of Greece, not much poetry has been produced so thrillingly tender as some of the best of these songs. Here, for example, is one, rude enough perhaps in language and versification,—but every line, every cadence is steeped in pathos:—

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!^a
There summer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry!
For there I took the last farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,^b
How rich the hawthorn's blossom;
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasped her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

^a Turbid with mud.

^b Birch.

Wi' mony a vow and locked embrace
 Our parting was fu' tender ;
 And, pledging aft to meet again,
 We tore oursels asunder ;
 But oh ! fell death's untimely frost,
 That nipt my flower sae early !
 Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
 That wraps my Highland Mary !
 O pale, pale now those rosy lips
 I aft hae kissed sae fondly !
 And closed for aye the sparkling glance
 That dwelt on me sae kindly !
 And mouldering now in silent dust
 That heart that lo'ed^c me dearly !
 But still within my bosom's core
 Shall live my Highland Mary.

These compositions are so universally known, that it is needless to give more of those of them which are in the same style at full length ; but we may throw together a few verses collected from some of the others :—

When o'er the hill the eastern star
 Tells bughtin'^d time is near, my joe ;
 And owsen^e frae the furrowed field
 Return sae dowf^f and weary, O ;
 Down by the burn, where scented birks
 Wi' dew are hanging clear, my joe,
 I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,^g
 My ain^h kind dearie, O.
 In mirkestⁱ glen, at midnight hour,
 I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie,^k O,
 If through that glen I gaed^l to thee,
 My ain kind dearie, O.
 Although the night were ne'er sae wild,
 And I were ne'er sae weary, O,
 I'd meet thee on the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O.

^c Loved.^d Folding.^e Oxen.^f Dull, spiritless.^g Grassy ridge.^h Own.ⁱ Darkest.^k Frightened by dread of spirits.^l We

I hae sworn by the heavens to my Mary,
 I hae sworn by the heavens to be true;
 And sae may the heavens forget me,
 When I forget my vow!
 O plight me your faith, my Mary,
 And plight me your lily-white hand;
 O plight me your faith, my Mary,
 Before I leave Scotia's strand.
 We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
 In mutual affection to join;
 And cursed be the cause that shall part us!
 The hour, and the moment o' time!

O poortith^m could, and restless love,
 Ye wreck my peace between ye;
 Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
 An' 'twere na for my Jeanie.
 O why should fate sicⁿ pleasure have
 Life's dearest bands untwining?
 Or why sae sweet a flower as love
 Depend on fortune's shining?

To thy bosom lay my heart,
 There to throb and languish;
 Though despair had wrung its core,
 That would heal its anguish.

Take away these rosy lips,
 Rich with balmy treasure:
 Turn away thine eyes of love,
 Lest I die with pleasure.

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear,
 Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear;
 Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
 And soft as their parting tear, Jessy!

Although thou maun^o never be mine,
 Although even hope is denied,
 'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
 Than aught in the world beside, Jessy !

.

Ae^p fond kiss, and then we sever ;
 Ae fareweel, alas, for ever !

.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
 Had we never loved sae blindly,
 Never met, or never parted,
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest !
 Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest !

.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever ;
 Ae fareweel, alas, for ever !

.

In all, indeed, that he has written best, Burns may be said to have given us himself,—the passion or sentiment which swayed or possessed him at the moment,—almost as much as in his songs. In him the poet was the same as the man. He could describe with admirable fidelity and force incidents, scenes, manners, characters, or whatever else, which had fallen within his experience or observation ; but he had little proper dramatic imagination, or power of going out of himself into other natures, and, as it were, losing his personality in the creations of his fancy. His blood was too hot, his pulse beat too tumultuously, for that ; at least he was during his short life too much the sport both of his own passions and of many other stormy influences to acquire such power of intellectual self-command and self-sup-

pression. What he might have attained to if a longer earthly existence had been granted to him—or a less tempestuous one—who shall say? Both when his genius first blazed out upon the world, and when its light was quenched by death, it seemed as if he had been born or designed to do much more than he had done. Having written what he wrote before his twenty-seventh year, he had doubtless much more additional poetry in him than he gave forth between that date and his death at the age of thirty-seven—poetry which might now have been the world's for ever if that age had been worthy of such a gift of heaven as its glorious poet—if it had not treated him rather like an untameable howling hyæna, that required to be caged and chained, if not absolutely suffocated at once, than as a spirit of divinest song. Never surely did men so put a bushel upon the light, first to hide and at last to extinguish it. As it is, however, the influence of the poetry of Burns upon the popular mind of Scotland must have been immense. And we believe it has been all for good—enlarging, elevating, and refining the national heart, as well as awakening it. The tendency of some things, both in the character of the people and in their peculiar institutions, required such a check or counteraction as was supplied by this frank, generous, reckless poetry, springing so singularly out of the ironbound Calvinistic Presbyterianism of the country, like the flowing water from the rock in Horeb. What would not such a poet as Burns be worth to the people of the United States of America, if he were to arise among them at this moment? It would be as good as another Declaration of Independence. Now, what would not such a popular poetry as his be

worth in any country to any people? There is no people whom it would not help to sustain in whatever nobleness of character belonged to them, if it did not more ennoble them. For, whatever there may be to be disapproved of in the licence or indecorum of some things that Burns has written, there is at least nothing mean-souled in his poetry, any more than there was in the man. It is never for a moment even vulgar or low in expression or manner: it is wonderful how a native delicacy of taste and elevation of spirit in the poet have sustained him here, with a dialect so soiled by illiterate lips, and often the most perilous subject. Burns, the peasant, is perhaps the only modern writer of Scotch (not excepting even Sir Walter Scott) who has written it uniformly like a gentleman. Not that his language is not sometimes strong or bold enough, and even, on two or three occasions, coarse; but these momentary outbreaks of a wild levity have never anything in them that can be called base or creeping. On the other hand, some of the most tremulously passionate of his pieces are models of refinement of style. And such as is the poetry of Burns was his life. Even his faults of character and errors of conduct were those of a high nature; and on the whole were more really estimable, as well as more loveable, than the virtues of most other people. Misled he often was, as he has himself said in one of the pieces we have transcribed above—

“ Misled by fancy’s meteor-ray,
By passion driven:
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven.”

REMAINING LITERATURE OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The remaining literature of the closing portion of the eighteenth century may be very summarily dismissed. This was an age of popular song in England, as well as in Scotland: while Burns was in the last years of his life enriching Thomson's 'Collection of Original Scottish Airs' and Johnson's 'Musical Museum' with words for the old melodies of his country that have become a part of the being of every Scotsman, Charles Dibdin, like another Tyrtaeus, was putting new patriotism into every English heart by his inspiring strains—some of the best of which Tyrtaeus never matched. Dibdin, who, besides his songs, wrote many pieces for the stage, survived till 1814, when he died at about the age of seventy.

In prose literature, although there was book-making enough, not much that has proved enduring was done in England during the last decade and a half of the eighteenth century, at least if we except a few works produced by one or two of the great writers of the preceding time who have been already noticed—such, for instance, as the three last volumes of Gibbon's History, published in 1788, and Burke's Reflections and other writings, chiefly on the subject of the French Revolution, which appeared between 1790 and his death in 1797. We may also mention here the publication in 1798, in five volumes 4to., of the first collected edition of the Works of Horace Walpole, comprising, along with other novelties, a volume of his always lively and entertaining and often brilliant Letters, the portion of his writings upon which his fame is probably destined chiefly to rest. His *Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of*

the Reign of George II., in two quarto volumes, were not given to the world till 1822; and their continuation, his *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.*, are only yet in part published, the two first volumes having appeared in 1844.

In the Drama, with activity enough among a crowd of writers, very little was produced in this period that retains its place in our literature. Mrs. Inchbald, Thomas Holcroft, Thomas Morton, John O'Keefe, Charles Dibdin, and George Colman the Younger (already mentioned), Francis Reynolds, and Joseph George Holman were the principal writers who supplied the theatres with new pieces; and Holcroft's *Road to Ruin* (1792), Morton's *Speed the Plough* (1798), Mrs. Inchbald's *Wives as they Were and Maids as they Are* (1797), and Colman's *Sylvester Daggerwood*, originally entitled *New Hay at the Old Market* (1795), are all of more or less merit, and retain some popularity. No great comedy however belongs to this time. The tragedies produced were such as *Madame d'Arblay's Edwy and Elgiva*, brought out at Drury Lane in 1795, but never printed; Arthur Murphy's *Arminius* (1798); Godwin's *Antonio* (1801), &c.

In the department of fictitious narrative there was more to boast of. William Godwin, already distinguished by his *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, made a great sensation in 1794 by his novel of '*Things as they Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams*,' a performance still standing almost alone in our literature of that description for earnest, impassioned verisimilitude; and in 1799 the same writer achieved perhaps a still greater triumph by a different application of the same kind of

power, in his *St. Leon*, in which even the supernatural and impossible is invested with the strongest likeness to truth and reality. The *Evelina* of Miss Frances Burney (afterwards Madame d'Arblay) appeared in 1778; her *Cecilia* in 1782; her *Camilla* in 1796. Mrs. Radcliffe (originally Miss Ann Ward) produced within this period her *Romance of the Forest* and her *Mysteries of Udolpho*; Mrs. Charlotte Smith (originally Miss Turner) her *Romance of Real Life*, and several other novels, all of superior merit; Dr. John Moore his *Zeluco*, his *Edward*, and his *Mordaunt*; Mrs. Inchbald, her *Simple Story* (in 1791).

In History, if we except the conclusion of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, no work that has any pretensions to be accounted classical was added to our literature. The first edition of Mitford's *History of Greece* was published in 1784; another '*History of Ancient Greece*,' in two volumes quarto, by Dr. John Gillies, who afterwards succeeded Dr. Robertson as Royal Historiographer for Scotland, appeared in 1786; John Pinkerton published his *Dissertation on the Scythians or Goths* in 1787, his *Inquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the Reign of Malcolm III.* (forming an introduction to Lord Hailes's *Annals*) in 1789, and his *History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stuart to that of Mary* (filling up the interval between Hailes and Robertson) in 1797; all works of research and ingenuity, but of no merit as pieces of composition. The Rev. John Whitaker, who had previously made himself known by his '*History of Manchester*,' and his '*Genuine History of the Britons Asserted*,' published his '*Mary Queen of Scots Vindicated*,' in 1787; and many minutiae

of the national antiquities were illustrated, in the *Archæologia* or in separate publications, by Gough, the editor of Camden's *Britannia*, Dr. Samuel Pegge, and other patient and laborious inquirers. In Biography, historical and literary, besides Boswell's great work, 'The Life of Samuel Johnson,' which first appeared, in two quarto volumes, in 1790, there was Mr. Roscoe's elegant 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici,' published in 1795. The same writer's 'Life and Pontificate of Leo X.' did not appear till 1805.

Of Criticism and Commentatorship of all kinds there was abundance. At least a brilliant beginning was made in the study of the literature of India and other Eastern countries by a few adventurous inquirers, led by Sir William Jones, whose French version of the Life of Nadir Shah from the Persian appeared in 1770; his Persian Grammar in 1771; his Six Books of Commentaries, in Latin, on the Persian Poetry, in 1774; his translation of the *Moallakat* from the Arabic in 1783; his translation of the Sanscrit drama of *Sacountala* in 1790; his translation of the Ordinances of Menu in 1794; and his various disquisitions on the languages, learning, and history of the Oriental nations, printed in the *Asiatic Researches*, in the early volumes of that publication, begun in 1788. Jones also, besides his poetry already mentioned, and his Essay on the Law of Bailments and one or two other professional tracts, had in 1779 published a translation of the Speeches of *Isæus* from the Greek. Other translations from the ancient languages published during this period were that of Aristotle's *Treatise on Poetry*, by Pye (afterwards poet laureate), in 1788, that of the same work by the Rev

Thomas Twining in 1789, that of Aristotle's *Ethics and Politics* by Dr. Gillies in 1797, and that of the works of Tacitus by Arthur Murphy in 1793. Harris's '*Hermes, or a Philosophical Enquiry concerning Language and Universal Grammar*,' had appeared in 1757; the first volume of Lord Monboddo's '*Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of Language*' in 1774: but it was not till the year 1792 that the sixth and last volume of the latter saw the light. Meanwhile, the first part of what has proved a much more influential work, Horne Tooke's celebrated '*Diversions of Purley*,' appeared in 1786 in an octavo volume, afterwards expanded into a quarto, to which a second was added in 1805. The germ of his system, however, had been stated by Tooke in his Letter to Mr. Dunning, published in 1778. In Latin scholarship, the most remarkable production of this date was perhaps the edition of the work of the Scottish writer William Bellenden, or Bellendenus, entitled *De Statu*, which appeared anonymously in 1787, with a long and eloquent Latin Preface, loud in its advocacy of the Whig politics and laudation of the Whig leaders of the day, now known to be the composition of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Parr, who had already some years before announced himself in a sermon published under the name of Phileleutherus Norfolciensis, and was for nearly forty years after this date to continue to make considerable noise in the literary world as theologian, critic, Philopatri Varvicensis, &c. Parr was assisted in the preparation of his edition of Bellendenus by his friend Henry Homer, who published some good editions of Horace, Cæsar, and other Latin authors, but died at an early age in 1791. Another reverend politician and

classical scholar of this day was Gilbert Wakefield, who, being a dissenter, carried his liberalism both in politics and in divinity considerably farther than Dr. Parr, and was, from his twentieth year till his death in 1801, at the age of forty-five, one of the most restless of writers upon all sorts of subjects. Wakefield published an edition of Virgil's *Georgics* in 1788 ; his *Silva Critica* (a miscellany of Latin notes upon the Sacred Scriptures and other ancient writings) in 1789 ; and a complete translation of the New Testament in 1792 ; but his reputation as a scholar, whatever it may be, rests principally upon his work of greatest pretension, his collated and annotated edition of Lucretius, published in 1796 and 1797. He also gave to the world editions of several Greek tragedies, of Bion and Moschus, of Horace, and of Virgil ; and among his numerous original works are an unfinished Inquiry into the Opinions of the Fathers concerning the Person of Christ, an Answer to Paine's *Age of Reason*, a Reply to (Watson) the Bishop of Llandaff's Address to the People of Great Britain (for the publication of which, in 1798, he was brought to trial by the government, and, being convicted of a seditious libel, was imprisoned for two years in Dorchester gaol), and his *Memoirs of his Own Life*, first published in 1795. His Correspondence with Charles Fox was printed after his death. The excellent edition of Aristotle's *Treatise on Poetry*, which had been prepared by Thomas Tyrwhitt, the admirable editor of Chaucer, before his death in 1786, was brought out at Oxford, from the Clarendon press, in 1794. In 1795 his edition of the *Hecuba* of Euripides, which was followed by the *Orestes*, *Phœnissæ*, and *Medea*, crowned the reputa-

of Richard Porson, who had already given proof of his unrivalled acuteness in his Letters to Archdeacon Travis on the subject of the controverted passage about the three witnesses in the First Epistle of John, published in 1790, and who, in the union of extensive and exact knowledge of the Greek language, has had few superiors among modern scholars. Porson, upon whom the mantle of the great Bentley seemed to have descended, and who might perhaps have left a name as illustrious as his if unfortunate habits of life had not wasted as well as probably shortened his days, died at the age of forty-nine in 1808. Other active labourers during this period in the department of classical scholarship were Dr. Thomas Randolph, who died Bishop of London in 1813; Dr. Thomas Burgess, the late Bishop of Salisbury; and the late Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. Herbert Marsh, whose varied acquirements and literary performances embraced politics, theology, and German and Oriental learning, as well as Greek and Latin. The last thirty or forty years of the eighteenth century formed, moreover, the great age of commentatorship upon Shakspeare, and also upon some other portions of our old poetry. Dr. Johnson's first edition of Shakspeare, in eight volumes, appeared in 1765; George Steevens's edition of the Twenty Old Quartos, in four volumes, in 1766; Edward Capel's edition of all the Plays, in ten volumes, in 1768, but his Notes, in three volumes quarto, not till 1783, two years after the author's death; Sir Thomas Hanmer's in six quartos, in 1771; that by Johnson and Steevens, in ten octavos, in 1773; their second edition in 1778; the Supplement to that edition by Edmund Malone, in two volumes, in 1780;

Isaac Reed's first edition (sometimes called the third edition of Johnson and Steevens) in 1786; Malone's first edition, in ten volumes, in 1790; Isaac Reed's second edition, in twenty-one volumes, in 1803; Malone's second, in sixteen volumes, in 1816. We have already mentioned the two volumes on Ireland's forgeries (to the second of which, it may be here stated, an 'Appendix' was added in 1800), published by George Chalmers, the laborious author of many other works, generally written in the most fantastic style, on finance, economical science, and the politics of the day, as well as of various historical and antiquarian compilations, the most important of which, however, his *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, and his *Caledonia* (unfinished), were not published till after the commencement of the present century, as well as the editor of Allan Ramsay, Sir David Lyndsay, and others of our old poets. Following, also, in the path struck out by Warton and Percy, John Pinkerton, Joseph Ritson, David Macpherson, George Ellis, and others investigated, with more or less learning and acuteness, the history of our early poetry, or edited different portions of it.

In Moral Speculation, political, philosophical, and theological, among the principal names belonging to this age of our literature are, besides Burke, Paine, Godwin, Mary Wolstonecraft, Paley, Bishops Watson, Horsely, and Porteus, Priestley, Price, Dr. Geddes, Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen, Dr. MacKnight of Edinburgh, Dr. Blair, &c. Of Thomas Paine's three dexterous and smartly-written works, the first, his '*Common Sense*,' was published in 1776; the next, his '*Rights of Man*,' in 1791-2; the last, his '*Age of Reason*,' in 1794

Mary Wolstonecraft's more declamatory 'Vindication of the Rights of Women' came forth immediately after the First Part of Paine's Rights of Man—not unlike the hollow but imposing thunder of the artillery following the flash. Godwin's more systematic exposition of the new philosophy (not destined ever to grow old), his 'Enquiry concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on general Virtue and Happiness,' appeared in 1793. Bishop Watson, who, besides five volumes of 'Chemical Essays' and a variety of charges, sermons, addresses, and other occasional publications, had defended the cause of religion against the subtle learning of Gibbon in his 'Apology for Christianity' in 1776, twenty years later wrote his 'Apology for the Bible' in answer to the bold ignorance of Paine. All these performances, however, attacks and defences alike, having served each its temporary purpose, are already passed, or are fast passing, away into forgetfulness. Not so with Archdeacon Paley's works: his 'Elements of Moral and Political Philosophy,' published in 1785; his 'Horæ Paulinæ,' in 1790; his 'View of the Evidence of Christianity,' in 1794; and his 'Natural Theology,' in 1802—all of which are characterised by a matureness in the conception, and a care and sterling ability in the execution, that will make it long before they are superseded. Finally, we ought not to omit to notice that the first edition of Mr. Malthus's celebrated 'Essay on the Principle of Population' was published in 1798 in an octavo pamphlet, although it differed hardly more in size than it did in substance from the next edition, expanded into a quarto volume, which appeared in 1803.

SPIRIT OF THE ENGLISH LITERATURE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

It would almost seem as if there were something in the impressiveness of the great chronological event formed by the termination of one century and the commencement of another that had been wont to act with an awakening and fructifying power upon literary genius in this island. Of the three last great sunbursts of our literature, the first, making what has been called the Elizabethan age of our dramatic and other poetry, threw its splendour over the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first of the seventeenth century; the second, famous as the Augustan age of Anne, brightened the earlier years of the eighteenth; the nineteenth century was ushered in by the third. At the termination of the reign of George III., in the year 1820, there were still among us, not to mention minor names, at least nine or ten poetical writers, each (whatever discordance of opinion there may be about either their relative or their absolute merits) commanding universal attention from the reading world to whatever he produced:—Crabbe (to take them in the order of their seniority), Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Campbell, Moore, Byron, Shelley, and perhaps we ought to add Keats, though rather for what he promised to do if he had lived than for what he had actually done. Many other voices there were from which divine words were often heard, but these were oracles to whom all listened, whose inspiration all men acknowledged. It is such crowding and clustering of remarkable writers that has chiefly distinguished the great literary ages in every country: there are eminent

writers at other times, but then they come singly or in small numbers, as Lucretius, the noblest of the Latin poets, did before the Augustan age of Roman literature ; as our own Milton and Dryden did in the interval between our Elizabethan age and that of Anne ; as Goldsmith, and Burke, and Johnson, and then Cowper, and Burns, in twos and threes, or one by one, preceded and as it were led in the rush and crush of our last revival. For such single swallows, though they do not make, do yet commonly herald the summer ; and accordingly those remarkable writers who have thus appeared between one great age of literature and another have mostly, it may be observed, arisen not in the earlier but in the later portion of the interval—have been not the lagging successors of the last era, but the precursors of the next. But, however it is to be explained or accounted for, it does indeed look as if Nature in this, as in other things, had her times of production and of comparative rest and inactivity—her autumns and her winters—or, as we may otherwise conceive it, her alternations of light and darkness, of day and night. After a busy and brilliant period of usually some thirty or forty years, there has always followed in every country a long term during which the literary spirit, as if over-worked and exhausted, has manifested little real energy or power of life, and even the very demand and taste for the highest kind of literature, for depth, and subtlety, and truth, and originality, and passion, and beauty, has in a great measure ceased with the supply—a sober and slumbrous twilight of imitation and mediocrity, and little more than mechanical dexterity in bookmaking, at least with the generality of the popular and applauded writers. After all, the re-

awakening of our English literature, on each of the three occasions we have mentioned, was probably brought about mainly by the general political and social circumstances of the country and of the world at the time. The poetical and dramatic wealth and magnificence of the era of Elizabeth and James came, no doubt, for the most part, out of the passions that had been stirred and the strength that had been acquired in the mighty contests and convulsions which filled, here and throughout Europe, the middle of the sixteenth century; another breaking up of old institutions and re-edification of the state upon a new foundation and a new principle, the work of the last sixty years of the seventeenth century, if it did not contribute much to train the wits and fine writers of the age of Anne, at least both prepared the tranquillity necessary for the restoration of elegant literature, and disposed the public mind for its enjoyment; the poetical dayspring, finally, that came with our own century was born with, and probably in some degree out of, a third revolution, which shook both established institutions and the minds and opinions of men throughout Europe as much almost as the Reformation itself had done three centuries and a half before. It is also to be observed that on each of these three occasions the excitement appears to have come to us in part from a foreign literature which had undergone a similar re-awakening, or put forth a new life and vigour, shortly before our own: in the Elizabethan age the contagion or impulse was caught from the literature of Italy; in the age of Anne from that of France; in the present period from that of Germany.

WORDSWORTH.

This German inspiration operated most directly, and produced the most marked effect, in the poetry of Wordsworth. Wordsworth has preserved in the editions of his collected works some of his verses written so long ago as 1786; and he has also continued to reprint the two earliest of his published poems, entitled 'An Evening Walk, addressed to a Young Lady, from the Lakes of the North of England,' and 'Descriptive Sketches, taken during a pedestrian tour among the Alps,' both of which first appeared in 1793. The recollection of the former of these poems probably suggested to somebody, a few years later, the otherwise not very intelligible designation of the Lake School, which has been applied to this writer and his imitators, or supposed imitators. But the 'Evening Walk' and the 'Descriptive Sketches,' which are both written in the usual rhyming ten-syllabled verse, are perfectly orthodox poems, according to the common creed, in spirit, manner, and form. The peculiarities which are conceived to constitute what is called the Lake manner first appeared in the 'Lyrical Ballads;' the first volume of which was published in 1798, the second in 1800. In the Preface to the second volume of the 'Lyrical Ballads,' the author himself described his object as being to ascertain how far the purposes of poetry might be fulfilled "by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." It might, perhaps, be possible to defend this notion by the aid of certain assumptions as to what is implied in, or to be understood by, a state of vivid sensation, which it may be contended is ly another phrase for a state of poetical excitement:

undoubtedly the language of a mind in such a state, selected, or corrected, and made metrical, will be poetry. It is almost a truism to say so. Nay, we might go farther, and assert that in the circumstances supposed, the selection and the adaptation to metrical arrangement would not be necessary; the language would flow naturally into something of a musical shape (that being one of the conditions of poetical expression), and, although it might be improved by correction, it would have all the essentials of poetry as it was originally produced. But what is evidently meant is, that the real or natural language of any and every mind when simply in a state of excitement or passion is necessarily poetical. The respect in which the doctrine differs from that commonly held is, that it assumes mere passion or vivid sensation to be in all men and in all cases substantially identical with poetical excitement, and the language in which passion expresses itself to be consequently always poetry, at least after it has undergone some purification or pruning, and been reduced to metrical regularity. As for this qualification, we may remark that it must be understood to mean nothing more than that the language of passion is improved with reference to poetical effect by being thus trained and regulated; otherwise the statement would be contradictory and would refute itself; for if passion, or vivid sensation, always speaks in poetry, the metrical arrangement and the selection are unnecessary and unwarrantable; if these operations be indispensable, the language of vivid sensation is not always poetry. But surely it is evident from the nature of the thing that it is altogether a misconception of what poetry is to conceive it to be nothing more than the language naturally

prompted by passion or strong emotion. If that were all, all men, all women, and all children would be poets. Poetry, in the first place, is an art, just as painting is an art; and the one is no more to be practised solely under the guidance of strong emotion than the other. Secondly, poetical emotion is something as distinct from mere ordinary passion or excitement as is musical emotion, or the feeling of the picturesque or the beautiful or the grand in painting or in architecture; the one may and often does exist where there exists nothing of the other. Nobody has ever thought of defining music to be merely the natural vocal utterance of men in a state of vivid sensation, or painting to be nothing more than their natural way of expressing themselves when in such a state by lines and colours: no more is poetry simply their real language, or expression by words, when in such a state. It makes no difference that words are a mode of expression of which men have much more generally the use than they have the use of either colours or musical sounds; if all men could sing or could handle the brush, they still would not all be musicians and painters whenever they were in a passion. It is true that even in the rudest minds emotion will tend to make the expression more vivid and forcible; but it will not for all that necessarily rise to poetry. Emotion or excitement alone will not produce that idealization in which poetry consists. To have that effect the excitement must be of a peculiar character, and the mind in which it takes place must be peculiarly gifted. The mistake has probably arisen from a confusion of two things which are widely different—the real language of men in a state of excitement, and the imaginative imitation of

such language in the artistic delineation of the excitement. The latter alone will necessarily or universally be poetical; the former may be the veriest of prose. It may be said, indeed, that it is not men's real language, but the imitation of it, which is meant to be called poetry by Wordsworth and his followers—that, of course, their own poetry, even when most conformable to their own theory, can only consist of what they conceive would be the real language of persons placed in the circumstances of those from whom it professes to proceed. But this explanation, besides that it leaves the theory we are examining, considered as an account or definition of poetry, as narrow and defective as ever, still assumes that poetical imitation is nothing more than transcription, or its equivalent—such invention as comes as near as possible to what literal transcription would be; which is the very misapprehension we are endeavouring to expose. It is equally false, we contend, to say that poetry is nothing more than either the real language of men in a state of excitement, or the mere imitation, the closer the better, of that real language. The imitation must be an idealized imitation—an intermingling of the poet with his subject by which it receives a new character; just as, in painting, a great portrait, or other picture from nature, is never a fac-simile copy, but always as much a reflection from the artist's own spirit as from the scene or object it represents. The realm of nature and the realm of art, indeed, although counterparts, are nevertheless altogether distinct the one from the other; and both painting and poetry belong to the latter, not to the former.

We cannot say that Wordsworth's theory of poetry has been altogether without effect upon his practice, but

it has shown itself rather by some deficiency of refinement in his general manner than by much that he has written in express conformity with its requisitions. We might affirm, indeed, that its principle is as much contradicted and confuted by the greater part of his own poetry as it is by that of all languages and all times in which poetry has been written, or by the universal past experience of mankind in every age and country. He is a great poet, and has enriched our literature with much beautiful and noble writing, whatever be the method or principle upon which he constructs, or fancies that he constructs, his compositions. His 'Laodamia,' without the exception of a single line, his 'Lonely Leech-gatherer,' with the exception of very few lines; his 'Ruth,' his 'Tintern Abbey,' his 'Feast of Brougham,' the 'Water Lily,' the greater part of the 'Excursion,' most of the 'Sonnets,' his great 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality in Early Childhood,' and many of his shorter lyrical pieces, are nearly as unexceptionable in diction as they are deep and true in feeling, judged according to any rules or principles of art that are now patronized by anybody. It is true, indeed, that it will not do to look at anything that Wordsworth has written through the spectacles of that species of criticism which was in vogue among us in the last century; we believe that in several of the pieces we have named even that narrow and superficial doctrine (if it could be recalled from the tomb) would find little or nothing to object to, but we fear it would find as little to admire; it had no feeling or understanding of the poetry of any other era than its own,—neither of that of Homer, nor that of the Greek dramatists, nor

that of our own Elizabethan age,—and it certainly would not enter far into the spirit either of that of Wordsworth or of any other great writer of his and our time. It is part, and a great part, of what the literature of Germany has done for us within the last fifty years, that it has given a wider scope and a deeper insight to our perception and mode of judging of the poetical in all its forms and manifestations; and the poetry of Wordsworth has materially aided in establishing this revolution of taste and critical doctrine, by furnishing the English reader with some of the earliest and many of the most successful or most generally appreciated examples and illustrations of the precepts of the new faith. Even the errors of Wordsworth's poetical creed and practice, the excess to which he has sometimes carried his employment of the language of the common people, and his attempts to extract poetical effects out of trivial incidents and humble life, were fitted to be rather serviceable than injurious in the highly artificial state of our poetry when he began to write. He may not have succeeded in every instance in which he has tried to glorify the familiar and elevate the low, but he has nevertheless taught us that the domain of poetry is much wider and more various than it used to be deemed, that there is a great deal of it to be found where it was formerly little the fashion to look for anything of the kind, and that the poet does not absolutely require for the exercise of his art and the display of his powers what are commonly called illustrious or distinguished characters, and an otherwise dignified subject, any more than long and learned words. Of all his English contemporaries Wordsworth stands foremost and alone as the poet

common life. It is not his only field, nor perhaps the field in which he is greatest; but it is the one which is most exclusively his own. He has, it is true, no humour or comedy of any kind in him (which is perhaps the explanation of the ludicrous points that are sometimes found in his serious poetry), and therefore he is not, and seldom attempts to be, what Burns was for his countrymen, the poetic interpreter, and, as such, refiner as well as embalmer, of the wit and merriment of the common people: the writer by whom that title is to be won is yet to arise, and probably from among the people themselves: but of whatever is more tender or more thoughtful in the spirit of ordinary life in England the poetry of Wordsworth is the truest and most comprehensive transcript we possess. Many of his verses, embodying as they do the philosophy as well as the sentiment of this every-day human experience, have a completeness and impressiveness, as of texts, mottoes, proverbs, the force of which is universally felt, and has already worked them into the texture and substance of the language to a far greater extent, we apprehend, than has happened in the case of any contemporary writer.

Wordsworth, though still left with us after the lapse of more than half a century since the publication of his first poetry, is already a classic; and, extensively as he is now read and appreciated, the present review of our national literature would be very incomplete without at least a few extracts from his works illustrative of the various styles in which he has written. As a specimen of what may be called his more peculiar manner, or that which is or used to be more especially understood by the School of poetry, we will begin with the following

verses entitled 'The Fountain, a Conversation,' which, in his own classification, are included among what he designates 'Poems of Sentiment and Reflection,' and are stated to have been composed in 1799 :—

We walked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew!" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old Border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here, beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old man replied,
The grey-haired men of glee:

"No check, no stay, this streamlet fears;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay :

And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With nature never do they wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free :

But we are pressed by heavy laws ;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own ;
It is the man of mirth.

My days, my friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

" Now, both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains !
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains,

And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I 'll be a son to thee ! "

At this he grasped my hand, and said,
" Alas ! that cannot be ! "

We rose up from the fountain-side ;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide ;
And through the wood we went ;
And, ere we came to Leonard's Rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

The following, entitled 'The Affliction of Margaret,' dated 1804, and classed among the 'Poems founded on the Affections,' is more impassioned, but still essentially in the same style:—

Where art thou, my beloved son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

Seven years, alas! to have received
No tidings of an only child;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
I catch at them, and then I miss;
Was ever darkness like to this?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares!
He knows it not, he cannot guess:
Years to a mother bring distress;
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong:
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed:" and that is true;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain:
I now can see with better eyes;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And Fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight!
Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled, by inhuman men;
Or thou, upon a desert thrown,
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me:—'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass;
I question things, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend!

This last piece is perhaps one of the most favourable examples that could be produced in support of such a theory of poetry as Wordsworth appears to have set out with, and is supposed in the common notion to have adhered to in nearly all that he has written. The language is for the most part direct and simple, not very much distinguished except by the rhyme from what might be poured out in the circumstances supposed on the mere impulse of natural passion ; and yet the lines are full of poetical power. Undoubtedly, passion, or strong feeling, even in the rudest natures, has always something in it of poetry—something of the transforming and idealizing energy which gives both to conception and expression their poetical character ; still it is not true either that poetry is universally nothing more than vivid sensation, or that the real language of men, however much excited, is usually to any considerable extent poetry. Even in this poem, unadorned as it is for the greater part, there will be found to be a good deal besides metre added to the natural language of passion ; and the selection, too, must be understood as a selection of person as well as of language, for assuredly the Affliction of Margaret, even although it might have been as deeply felt, would not have supplied to one man or woman in a thousand or a million anything like either the diction or the train of reflection to which it has given birth in her—or rather in the great poet of whose imagination she, with all she feels and all she utters, is the creation. For this, after all, is the great fact, that there never has been and never can be poetry without a poet ; upon whatever principle or system of operation he may proceed, whether by the selection and metrical arrangement⁺

of the real language of passion or in any other way, it is the poet that makes the poetry, and without him it cannot have birth or being: he is the bee, without whom there can be no honey,—the artist, or true creator, from whom the thing produced, whatever be its material, takes shape, and beauty, and a living soul.

The following, dated 1798, is from the same class, and in the same style, with the last. The verses are very beautiful; they bear some resemblance to the touching old Scotch ballad called ‘Lady Anna Bothwell’s Lament,’ beginning

Balow, my boy, lie still and sleep;
It grieves me sair to see thee weep.—

of which there is a copy in Percy’s *Reliques*, and others, differing considerably from that, in other collections:—

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burned her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone:
And underneath the haystack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

“Sweet babe, they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee, have no fear of me;
But safe as in a cradle, here,
My lovely baby, shalt thou be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

A fire was once within my brain ;
 And in my head a dull, dull pain ;
 And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
 Hung at my breast, and pulled at me ;
 But then there came a sight of joy,
 It came at once to do me good ;
 I waked, and saw my little boy,
 My little boy of flesh and blood ;
 Oh joy for me that sight to see !
 For he was there, and only he.

Suck, little babe, oh suck again !
 It cools my blood, it cools my brain ;
 Thy lips I feel them, baby ! they
 Draw from my heart the pain away.
 Oh ! press me with thy little hand ;
 It loosens something at my chest ;
 About that tight and deadly band
 I feel thy little fingers prest.
 The breeze I see is in the tree :
 It comes to cool my babe and me.

Oh ! love me, love me, little boy !
 Thou art thy mother's only joy ;
 And do not dread the waves below,
 When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go ;
 The high crag cannot work me harm,
 Nor leaping torrents when they howl ;
 The babe I carry on my arm
 He saves for me my precious soul ;
 Then happy lie ; for blest am I ;
 Without me my sweet babe would die.

Then do not fear, my boy ! for thee
 Bold as a lion will I be :
 And I will always be thy guide,
 Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
 I'll build an Indian bower ; I know
 The leaves that make the softest bed :
 And, if from me thou wilt not go,
 But still be true till I am dead,
 My pretty thing, then thou shalt sing
 As merry as the birds in spring.

Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest ;
'Tis all thine own !—and, if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove !
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love ;
And what if my poor cheek be brown ?
'Tis well for thee, thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

Dread not their taunts, my little life ;
I am thy father's wedded wife ;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stayed :
From him no harm my babe can take ;
But he, poor man ! is wretched made ;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

I'll teach my boy the sweetest things,
I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe ! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
— Where art thou gone, my own dear child ?
What wicked looks are those I see ?
Alas ! alas ! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me :
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

Oh ! smile on me, my little lamb !
For I thy own dear mother am.
My love for thee has well been tried :
I've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade,
I know the earth-nuts fit for food :
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid :
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away !
And there, my babe, we'll live for aye."

But much, perhaps we might say the greater part, of Wordsworth's poetry, is in a very different style or manner from what we have already quoted. Take, for example, his noble 'Laodamia,' dated 1814, and in the latest edition placed among what he calls 'Poems of the Imagination,' though formerly classed as one of the 'Poems founded on the Affections:':—

" With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired ;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required :
Celestial pity I again implore ;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore !"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands ;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands ;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows ;†
And she expects the issue in repose.

* Is this alteration really an improvement, or is it only old familiarity and first love that makes us prefer the lines as they originally stood ?—

" With sacrifice before the rising morn
Performed, my slaughtered Lord have I required ;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal Gods have I desired."

It seems to us that there is here more of passionate boldness and force.

† We cannot help thinking that these three fine lines must have been originally designed to picture the first effect upon Laodamia of the appearance of her husband in answer to her prayer, not merely of the act or emotion of faith by which she may have expected him. We should not be sorry to see such a substitute found for the next line, fine as it too is in itself, and such other slight accommodations made, as would restore that meaning.

O terror! what hath she perceived? O joy!
What doth she look on? Whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him, winged Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamia! that at Jove's command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she assayed;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

"Protesilaus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the Vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the Gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
Doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;

Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou should'st cheat the malice of the grave;
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcae threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys*
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn."—

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Aeson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.
The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distressed,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast."

* Its former editions:—

"Know, virtue were not virtue if the joys."

But if thou goest I follow"—"Peace!" he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic acts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime day and night:

And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
The oracle upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

Yet bitter, oftentimes bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—

The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
'Behold, they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?'
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised:
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled; her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”*

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-appears!
Round the dear shade she would have clung—'tis vain:
The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:

* This noble stanza was, to our liking, better as it originally stood, commencing—

Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object:—love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for this end, &c.

“Learn to ascend—seeking a higher object,” seems to be little more than the same thing said twice over in different words.

The reader of Milton will remember the same idea in the eighth book of *Paradise Lost*:—

“Love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend.”

Swift, towards the realms that know not earthly day,
 He through the portal takes his silent way,
 And on the palace floor a lifeless corse she lay.

She—who, though warned, exhorted, and reproved
 Thus died, from passion desperate to a crime—
 By the just Gods, whom no weak pity moved,
 Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
 Apart from happy ghosts, that gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.*

* This is to us, we confess, a distressing alteration ; and such, we apprehend, will be nearly the universal feeling of those who remember the original lines :—

Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved !
 Her who, in reason's spite, yet without crime,
 Was in a trance of passion thus removed ;
 Delivered from the galling yoke of time,
 And these frail elements—to gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

The primary object of the remodelling seems to have been to accommodate the narrative to the account given by Virgil, who, as it is observed in a note, "places the shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy lovers." We confess to so much of "weak pity," both for the stanza as it formerly stood, and for poor Laodamia, that we should have gladly accepted the authority of the modern as quite as good as that of the ancient poet upon this occasion : but, at any rate, surely the verses might have been reformed without the aid of so desperate an expedient as that by which the second has been enabled to preserve its rhyme at the cost of every other poetical quality it possessed. We cannot think, either, that the gods, however pitiless, could with any justice or consistency, after having granted to Laodamia's passionate affection the temporary restoration of her husband, have doomed her to a place of punishment for merely suffering herself to be slain by the strength of the same affection. To expect that the warning exhortation and reproof should have so soon taken full efficacy, and already reduced a passion so omnipotent to complete subjection, seems quite unreasonable.

Yet tears to mortal suffering are due ;
 And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
 Are mourned by man,—and not by man alone,
 As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
 Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
 A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
 From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
 And ever, when such stature they had gained
 That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
 The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
 A constant interchange of growth and blight.

In the same grand strain is very much especially of Wordsworth's later poetry. Indeed, while the Lyrical Ballads have been ridiculed for their simplicity, the objection that has been commonly taken to most of what he has since written is that it is too magniloquent, and soars too far above the earth and the ordinary thoughts and concerns of men. At any rate neither puerility nor over familiarity of diction, with whatever other faults they may be chargeable, can well be attributed to either the Excursion, or the Sonnets, or the Odes, or indeed to almost anything else that this great poet has produced ever since the two volumes which first brought him into notice, both published, as we have seen, before the commencement of the present century. But it is, on the other hand, a gross misconception to imagine that this later poetry of Wordsworth's is especially remarkable for anything of a mystic character—that it is for the most part enveloped in a haze through which the meaning is only to be got at by initiated eyes. Nothing like this is the case. The Excursion, for instance, with the exception of a very few passages, is a poem that he who runs may read, and the greater part of which may be apprehended by readers of all classes as readily as almost any other

poetry in the language. In some of his other more recent works, again, Wordsworth has practised with eminent success the most popular of all our poetic styles, that of the old romance, in its highest and most refined forms. The Feast of Brougham may be mentioned as one example; but his greatest poem in this kind is his 'Egyptian Maid, or, The Romance of the Water Lily,' the concluding portion of which we will now give as our last specimen. The maid, a daughter of the Egyptian monarch, and sent by him to Britain to be bestowed upon the worthiest Christian knight, having been found cast ashore from her shipwrecked vessel, has been brought by the enchanter Merlin to the court of King Arthur at Caerleon. The king, after lamenting her sad hap, has proposed to inter with the due rites the apparently lifeless corse:—

"The tomb," said Merlin, "may not close
Upon her yet, earth hide her beauty;
Not froward to thy sovereign will
Esteem me, Liege! if I, whose skill
Wafted her hither, interpose
To check this pious haste of erring duty.

My books command me to lay bare
The secret thou art bent on keeping:
Here must a high attest be given,
What bridegroom was for her ordained by heaven:
And in my glass significant there are
Of things that may to gladness turn this weeping.

For this approaching, one by one,
Thy knights must touch the cold hand of the Virgin;
So, for the favoured one, the flower may bloom
Once more: but, if unchangeable her doom,
If life departed be for ever gone,
Some blest assurance, from this cloud emerging,

May teach him to bewail his loss ;
 Not with a grief that, like a vapour, rises
 And melts ; but grief devout that shall endure,
 And a perpetual growth secure
 Of purposes which no false thought shall cross,
 A harvest of high hopes and noble enterprises."

" So be it," said the King ;—" anon,
 Here, where the princess lies, begin the trial ;
 Knights, each in order as ye stand
 Step forth." To touch the pallid hand
 Sir Agravaïne advanced ; no sign he won
 From heaven or earth ;—Sir Kaye had like denial.

Abashed, Sir Dinas turned away ;
 Even for Sir Percival was no disclosure ;
 Though he, devoutest of all champions, ere
 He reached that ebon car, the bier
 Whereon diffused like snow the damsel lay,
 Full thrice had crossed himself in meek composure.

Imagine (but, ye saints ! who can ?)
 How in still air the balance trembled—
 The wishes, peradventure the despites,
 That overcame some not ungenerous knights ;
 And all the thoughts that lengthened out a span
 Of time to lords and ladies thus assembled.

What patient confidence was here !
 And there how many bosoms panted !
 While, drawing towards the car, Sir Gawaine, mailed
 For tournament, his beaver veiled,
 And softly touched ; but, to his princely cheer
 And high expectancy, no sign was granted.

Next, disencumbered of his harp,
 Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a brother,
 Came to the proof, nor grieved that there ensued
 No change ;—the fair Izonda he had wooed
 With love too true, a love with pangs too sharp,
 From hope too distant, not to dread another !

Not so Sir Lancelot ;—from heaven's grace
 A sign he craved, tired slave of vain contrition ;
 The royal Guinever looked passing glad
 When his touch failed.—Next came Sir Galahad ;

He paused, and stood entranced by that still face
Whose features he had seen in noontide vision.

For late, as near a murmuring stream
He rested 'mid an arbour green and shady,
Nina, the good enchantress, shed
A light around his mossy bed ;
And, at her call, a waking dream
Prefigured to his sense the Egyptian lady.

Now, while his bright-haired front he bowed,
And stood, far-kenned by mantle furred with ermine,
As o'er the insensate body hung
The enrapt, the beautiful, the young,
Belief sank deep into the crowd
That he the solemn issue would determine.

Nor deem it strange ; the youth had worn
That very mantle on a day of glory,
The day when he achieved that matchless feat,
The marvel of the PERILOUS SEAT,
Which whosoe'er approached of strength was shorn,
Though king or knight the most renowned in story.

He touched with hesitating hand—
And lo ! those birds, far-famed through love's dominions,
The swans, in triumph clap their wings ;
And their necks play, involved in rings,
Like sinless snakes in Eden's happy land ;—
" Mine is she," cried the knight ;—again they clapped
their pinions.

" Mine was she—mine she is, though dead,
And to her name my soul shall cleave in sorrow ;"
Whereat, a tender twilight streak
Of colour dawned upon the damsel's cheek ;
And her lips, quickening with uncertain red,
Seemed from each other a faint warmth to borrow.

Deep was the awe, the rapture high,
Of love emboldened, hope with dread entwining,
When, to the mouth, relenting death
Allowed a soft and flower-like breath,
Precursor to a timid sigh,
To lifted eyelids, and a doubtful shining.

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This will be admitted by all to be most graceful as well as expressive writing, and it has little or nothing of what are commonly regarded as the characteristic peculiarities of Wordsworth's manner—nothing of the undignified or over-familiar phraseology on the one hand, or of the soaring out of sight or comprehension on the other, with which he has been charged—only his easy power, the full flow and commanding sweep of his diction and his verse. Yet it is for its inner spirit that Wordsworth's poetry is admirable, rather than for its formal qualities. His style is for the most part direct and natural; when the occasion requires it rises to splendour and magnificence; if it be sometimes too colloquial, it is often also dignified and solemn; yet, with all its merits, it has not in general much of true artistic exquisiteness. In only a few of his poems, indeed, is his diction throughout of any tolerable elaboration and exactness; generally, both in his more familiar and in his loftier style, it is diffuse and unequal, a brittle mixture of poetical and prosaic forms, like the image of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The music of his verse, too, though almost always pleasing, and sometimes impassioned or majestic, has rarely or never much either of subtlety or originality.

COLERIDGE.

In all that constitutes artistic character the poetry of Coleridge is a contrast to that of Wordsworth. Coleridge, born in 1772, published the earliest of his poetry that is now remembered in 1796, in a small volume containing also some pieces by Charles Lamb, to which

some by Charles Lloyd were added in a second edition the following year. It was not till 1800, after he had produced and printed separately his 'Ode to the Departing Year' (1796), his noble ode entitled 'France' (1797), his 'Fears in Solitude' (1798), and his translations of both parts of Schiller's 'Wallenstein,' that he was first associated as a poet and author with Wordsworth, in the second volume of whose 'Lyrical Ballads,' published in 1800, appeared, as the contributions of an anonymous friend, Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner,' 'Foster Mother's Tale,' 'Nightingale,' and 'Love.' "I should not have requested this assistance," said Wordsworth, in his preface, "had I not believed that the poems of my friend would, in a great measure, have the same tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance in the colours of our style; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide." Coleridge's own account, however, is somewhat different. In his 'Biographia Literaria,' he tells us that, besides the 'Ancient Mariner,' he was preparing for the conjoint publication, among other poems, the 'Dark Ladie' and the 'Christabel,' in which he should have 'more nearly realized his ideal than he had done in his first attempt, when the volume was brought out with so much larger a portion of it the produce of Wordsworth's industry than his own, that his few compositions, "instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter;" and then he adds, in reference to the long preface in which Wordsworth had expounded his theory of poetry, "With many parts of this preface in the sense attributed to them, and which the words

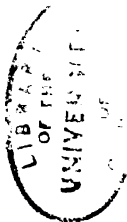
undoubtedly seem to authorise, I never concurred ; but, on the contrary, objected to them as erroneous in principle and contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface, and to the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves." Coleridge's poetry is remarkable for the perfection of its execution, for the exquisite art with which its divine informing spirit is endowed with formal expression. The subtly woven words, with all their sky colours, seem to grow out of the thought or emotion, as the flower from its stalk, or the flame from its feeding oil. The music of his verse, too, especially of what he has written in rhyme, is as sweet and as characteristic as anything in the language, placing him for that rare excellence in the same small band with Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher (in their lyrics), and Milton, and Collins, and Shelley, and Tennyson. It was probably only quantity that was wanting to make Coleridge the greatest poet of his day. Certainly, at least, some things that he has written have not been surpassed, if they have been matched, by any of his contemporaries. And (as indeed has been the case with almost all great poets) he continued to write better and better the longer he wrote ; some of his happiest verses were the produce of his latest years. As we have said in a paper on the poetry of Coleridge published some years ago,* "Not only, as we proceed from his earlier to his later compositions, does the execution become much more artistic and perfect, but the informing spirit is refined and purified—the tenderness grows more delicate and deep, the fire

* In the 'Printing Machine,' No. 12, for 16th August, 1834.

brighter and keener, the sense of beauty more subtle and exquisite. Yet from the first there was in all he wrote the divine breath which essentially makes poetry what it is. There was 'the shaping spirit of imagination,' evidently of soaring pinion and full of strength, though as yet sometimes unskilfully directed, and encumbered in its flight by an affluence of power which it sometimes seemed hardly to know how to manage: hence an unselecting impetuosity in these early compositions, never indicating anything like poverty of thought, but producing occasionally considerable awkwardness and turgidity of style, and a declamatory air, from which no poetry was ever more free than that of Coleridge in its maturer form. Yet even among these juvenile productions are many passages, and some whole pieces, of perfect gracefulness, and radiant with the purest sunlight of poetry. There is, for example, the most beautiful delicacy of sentiment, as well as sweetness of versification and expression, in the following lines, simple as they are:—

Maid of my love, sweet Genevieve !
 In beauty's light you glide along ;
 Your eye is like the star of eve,
 And sweet your voice as Seraph's song.
 Yet not your heavenly beauty gives
 This heart with passion soft to glow :
 Within your soul a voice there lives !
 It bids you hear the tale of woe.
 When sinking low the sufferer wan
 Beholds no hand outstretched to save,
 Fair, as the bosom of the swan
 That rises graceful o'er the wave,
 I've seen your breast with pity heave,
 And therefore love I you, sweet Genevieve !

And the following little picture, entitled 'Time, Real



and Imaginary,' is a gem worthy of the poet in the most thoughtful and philosophic strength of his faculties :—

On the wide level of a mountain's head,
 (I knew not where, but 'twas some fairy place),
 Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
 Two lovely children ran an endless race;
 A sister and a brother !
 That far outstripped the other ;
 Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
 And looks and listens for the boy behind :
 For he, alas ! is blind !
 O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
 And knows not whether he be first or last.

“ In a different manner, and more resembling that of these early poems in general, are many passages of great power in the *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*, and in the *Religious Musings*, the latter written in 1794, when the author was only in his twenty-third year. And, among other remarkable pieces of a date not much later, might be mentioned the ode entitled ‘*France*,’ written in 1797, which Shelley regarded as the finest ode in the language ; his ‘*Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*,’ written, we believe, about the same time ; his ode entitled ‘*Dejection* ;’ his blank verse lines entitled ‘*The Nightingale* ;’ his ‘*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*,’ and his exquisite verses entitled ‘*Love*,’ to which last for their union of passion with delicacy, and of both with the sweetest, richest music, it would be difficult to find a match in our own or any language.

“ Of Coleridge’s poetry, in its most matured form and in its best specimens, the most distinguishing characteristics are vividness of imagination and subtlety of thought, combined with unrivalled beauty and expressiveness of diction, and the most exquis-

melody of verse. With the exception of a vein of melancholy and meditative tenderness, flowing rather from a contemplative survey of the mystery—the strangely mingled good and evil—of all things human, than connected with any individual interests, there is not in general much of passion in his compositions, and he is not well fitted, therefore, to become a very popular poet, or a favourite with the multitude. His love itself, warm and tender as it is, is still Platonic and spiritual in its tenderness, rather than a thing of flesh and blood. There is nothing in his poetry of the pulse of fire that throbs in that of Burns; neither has he much of the homely every-day truth, the proverbial and universally applicable wisdom of Wordsworth. Coleridge was, far more than either of these poets, ‘of imagination *all* compact.’ The fault of his poetry is the same that belongs to that of Spenser; it is too purely or unalloyedly poetical. But rarely, on the other hand, has there existed an imagination in which so much originality and daring were associated and harmonized with so gentle and tremblingly delicate a sense of beauty. Some of his minor poems especially, for the richness of their colouring combined with the most perfect finish, can be compared only to the flowers which spring up into loveliness at the touch of ‘great creating nature.’ The words, the rhyme, the whole flow of the music seem to be not so much the mere expression or sign of the thought as its blossoming or irradiation—of the bright essence the equally bright though sensible effluence.”

The poem entitled ‘Love’ is somewhat too long to be given entire; and it is, besides, probably familiar to most of our readers: but those of them to whom it is

best known will not object to have a few of the verses again placed before them here :—

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve ;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve !

She leaned against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight ;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope, my joy, my Genevieve !
She loves me best whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace ;
For well she knew I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand ;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined ; and ah !
The deep, the low, the pleading tone,
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

All impulses of soul and sense
 Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve ;
 The music and the doleful tale,
 The rich and balmy eve ;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
 An undistinguishable throng,
 And gentle wishes long subdued,
 Subdued and cherished long !

She wept with pity and delight,
 She blushed with love, and virgin shame ;
 And like the murmur of a dream
 I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
 As conscious of my look she stepped—
 Then suddenly, with timorous eye,
 She fled to me and wept.

She half inclosed me with her arms,
 She pressed me with a meek embrace ;
 And, bending back her head, looked up,
 And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
 And partly 'twas a bashful art,
 That I might rather feel, than see,
 The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
 And told her love with virgin pride ;
 And so I won my Genevieve,
 My bright and beauteous bride.

Here is another melodious breathing of deeper and more thoughtful tenderness, entitled 'Sonnet, to a Friend who asked how I felt when the Nurse first presented my Infant to me :—

Charles ! my slow heart was only sad, when first
 I scanned that face of feeble infancy :
 For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
 All I had been, and all my child might be !
 But when I saw it on its mother's arm,
 And hanging at her bosom (she the while
 Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile),
 Then I was thrilled and melted, and most warm

Impressed a father's kiss : and, all beguiled
 Of dark remembrance and presageful fear,
 I seemed to see an angel form appear :—
 'Twas even thine, beloved woman mild !
 So for the mother's sake the child was dear,
 And dearer was the mother for the child.

From the loftier strains of this early date, or a time not much later, we can only find room for a portion of the ode entitled ' Dejection ' :—

My genial spirits fail ;
 And what can these avail
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?
 It were a vain endeavour,
 Though I should gaze for ever
 On that green light that lingers in the west :
 I may not hope from outward forms to win
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone does nature live :
 Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud !
 And, would we aught behold of higher worth
 Than that inanimate cold world allowed
 To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
 Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
 Enveloping the earth ;—
 And from the soul itself must there be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element !

O pure of heart ! thou need'st not ask of me
 What this strong music in the soul may be !
 What, and wherein it doth exist,
 This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
 This beautiful and beauty-making power.

Joy, virtuous Lady ! Joy that ne'er was given
 Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
 Life and life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
 Joy, Lady ! is the spirit and the power
 Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
 A new Earth and new Heaven,

Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
 Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud :—
 We in ourselves rejoice !
 And thence flows all that charms our ear or sight,
 All melodies the echoes of that voice,
 All colours a suffusion from that light.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
 This joy within me dallied with distress,
 And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
 Whence fancy made me dreams of happiness :
 For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
 And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
 But now afflictions bow me down to earth :
 Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
 But ah ! each visitation
 Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
 My shaping spirit of Imagination.
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,
 But to be still and patient, all I can ;
 And haply by abstruse research to steal
 From my own nature all the natural man—
 This was my sole resource, my only plan :
 Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
 And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

Some resemblance may be traced between the thought in a part of this extract and Wordsworth's noble ode entitled ' Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood,' where he exclaims—

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
 The earth and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Apparell'd in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.
 It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison house begin to close
 Upon the growing boy ;
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
 The youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
 At length the man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

It is almost profanation to mutilate this magnificent hymn ; but, having given the above lines, we will add another passage, which can be separated with the least injury from the rest :—

O joy ! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That Nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive !
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benediction : not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest ;
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise ;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings ;
 Blank misgivings of a creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised !

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.
Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

No comparison, of course, is to be instituted between this lofty strain and Coleridge's much less elaborate ode.

As a remarkable illustration, however, of the difference between the poetical genius of the one and that of the other when exercised in a more light and fanciful manner, we will give an example of the treatment of the same subject by both. The following little poem by Wordsworth is entitled 'The Complaint :—

There is a change—and I am poor ;
Your love hath been, not long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow ;
And flow it did ; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count !
Blest was I then all bliss above ;
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love
What have I ? shall I dare to tell ?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry :
What matter ? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity ?
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

The following, entitled 'The Pang more sharp than All, an Allegory,' is Coleridge's :—

He too has flitted from his secret nest,
Hope's last and dearest child without a name !—
Has flitted from me, like the warmthless flame,
That makes false promise of a place of rest
To the tired pilgrim's still believing mind ;—
Or like some elfin knight in kingly court,
Who, having won all guerdons in his sport,
Glides out of view, and whither none can find.

Yes ! He hath flitted from me—with what aim,
Or why, I know not ! 'Twas a home of bliss,
And he was innocent, as the pretty shame
Of babe, that tempts and shuns the menaced kiss,

From its twy-clustered hiding-place of snow !
 Pure as the babe, I ween, and all aglow
 As the dear hopes that swell the mother's breast—
 Her eyes down-gazing o'er her clasped charge ;—
 Yet gay as that twice happy father's kiss,
 That well might glance aside, yet never miss,
 Where the sweet mark embossed so sweet a target—
 Twice wretched he who hath been doubly blest !

Like a loose blossom on a gusty night
 He flitted from me—and has left behind
 (As if to them his faith he ne'er did plight),
 Of either sex and answerable mind,
 Two playmates, twin-births of his foster-dame :—
 The one a steady lad (Esteem he hight)
 And Kindness is the gentler sister's name ;
 Dim likeness now, though fair she be and good,
 Of that bright boy who hath us all forsook :—
 But, in his full-eyed aspect when she stood,
 And while her face reflected every look,
 And in reflection kindled, she became
 So like him, that almost she seemed the same !

Ah ! he is gone, and yet will not depart !—
 Is with me still, yet I from him exiled !
 For still there lives within my secret heart
 The magic image of the magic child,
 Which there he made up-grow by his strong art,
 As in that crystal orb*—Wise Merlin's feat—
 The wondrous " World of Glass," wherein inisled
 All longed-for things their beings did repeat ;—
 And there he left it, like a sylph beguiled,
 To live and yearn and languish incomplete !

Can wit of man a heavier grief reveal ?
 Can sharper pang from hate or scorn arise ?—
 Yes ! one more sharp there is—that deeper lies,
 Which fond esteem but mocks when he would heal.
 Yet neither scorn nor hate did it devise,
 But sad compassion and atoning zeal !
 One pang more blighting-keen than hope betrayed !
 And this it is my woeful hap to feel,
 When, at her brother's hest, the twin-born maid,

* Fairie Queene, iii. 2. 19.

With face averted and unsteady eyes,
 Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on;
 And, only shrinking from her own disguise,
 Enacts the faery boy that's lost and gone.
 O worse than all! O pang all pangs above
 Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love!

But Wordsworth and Coleridge, each gaining and each losing something, come much nearer to one another in their later poetry; that of Wordsworth takes more of the sky, that of Coleridge more of the earth; the former drops a good deal of its excessive realism (to use the word in a somewhat peculiar, but sufficiently intelligible sense), the latter something of its over-idealism. Among those of Coleridge's poems, however, to which an early date is fixed, there are a few, the execution of which is so perfect, that we should be inclined to think they had undergone much revision before they were published, and that, in part at least, they are to be properly considered as really the production of his later years. His 'Christabel,' for instance, is stated to have been written, the First Part in 1797, the Second Part in 1800; but we cannot help suspecting that the following lines, from what is called the 'Conclusion to Part First,' may have been an addition made not very long before the first publication of the poem in 1816:—

And see! the lady Christabel
 Gathers herself from out her trance;
 Her limbs relax, her countenance
 Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
 Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
 And oft the while she seems to smile
 As infants at a sudden light!
 Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
 Like a youthful hermitess,
 Beauteous in a wilderness,
 Who, praying always, prays in sleep.

And, if she move unquietly,
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
 Comes back and tingles in her feet.
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
 What if her guardian spirit 'twere ?
 What if she knew her mother near ?
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,
 That saints will aid if men will call :
 For the blue sky bends over all !

The filmy delicacy of this writing is exquisite ; every word is light and music. Equally beautiful, and in the same style, is the following little fragment, being the introductory stanzas of a poem on the ' Wanderings of Cain,' in which we are led to understand some progress had been made at an early date, although this stanza, all of the poem that has been preserved, was not published till towards the close of the author's life :—

Encinctured with a twine of leaves,
 That leafy twine his only dress !
 A lovely boy was plucking fruits,
 By moonlight, in a wilderness.
 The moon was bright, the air was free,
 And fruits and flowers together grew
 On many a shrub and many a tree :
 And all put on a gentle hue,
 Hanging in the shadowy air
 Like a picture rich and rare.
 It was a climate where, they say,
 The night is more beloved than day.
 But who that beauteous boy beguiled,
 That beauteous boy to linger here ?
 Alone, by night, a little child,
 In place so silent and so wild—
 Has he no friend, no loving mother near ?

In most of Coleridge's latest poetry, however, along with this perfection of execution, in which he was unmatched, we have more body and warmth—more of the inspiration of the heart mingling with that of the fancy

But, before quoting the specimens we intend to give of that, we would introduce a little piece, which seems to us eminently tender and beautiful, although less remarkable for high finish ; it is entitled ‘ A Day Dream :’—

My eyes make pictures, when they are shut :

I see a fountain, large and fair,

A willow and a ruined hut,

And thee, and me, and Mary there.

O Mary ! make thy gentle lap our pillow !

Bend o’er us, like a bower, my beautiful green willow !

A wild-rose roofs the ruined shed,

And that and summer well agree :

And lo ! where Mary leans her head,

Two dear names carved upon the tree !

And Mary’s tears, they are not tears of sorrow :

Our sister and our friend will both be here to-morrow.

’Twas day ! but now few, large, and bright

The stars are round the crescent moon !

And now it is a dark warm night,

The balmiest of the month of June !

A glow-worm fallen, and on the marge remounting,

Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet fountain.

O ever—ever be thou blest !

For dearly, Asra, love I thee !

This brooding warmth across my breast,

This depth of tranquil bliss—ah me !

Fount, tree, and shed are gone, I know not whither,

But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,

By the still dancing fire-flames made ;

And now they slumber, moveless all !

And now they melt to one deep shade !

But not from me shall this mild darkness steal thee :

I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee !

Thine eye-lash on my cheek doth play—

’Tis Mary’s hand upon my brow !

But let me check this tender lay,

Which none may hear but she and thou !

Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,
Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women !

We will now present a few of those gems without a flaw, which were the latest produce of Coleridge's genius. The following lines are entitled ' Work without Hope,' and are stated to have been composed 21st February, 1827 :—

• All nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of spring !
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing,
Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths ! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not ! Glide, rich streams, away !
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll :
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul ?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

To about the same date belongs the following, entitled ' Youth and Age : '—

Youth, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine ! Life went a maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young !
When I was young ?—Ah, woeful when !
Ah ! for the change 'twixt now and then !
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er airy cliffs and glittering sands
How lightly then it flashed along :—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide !

Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!

Ere I was old?—Ah, woeful ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet
'Tis known that thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be, that thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet tolled:—
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But springtide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!

Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,

When we are old:
That only serves to make us grieve,
With oft and tedious taking leave;
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismiss,
Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

The following was written, we believe, a year or two later. It winds up a prose dialogue between two girls and their elderly male friend the Poet, or Improvisatore, as he is more familiarly styled, who, after a most eloquent description of that rare mutual love, the poss-

sion of which he declares would be more than an adequate reward for the rarest virtue, to the remark, "Surely, he who has described it so well must have possessed it?" replies, "If he were worthy to have possessed it, and had believingly anticipated and not found it, how bitter the disappointment!" and then, after a pause, breaks out into verse thus:—

Yes, yes! that boon, life's richest treat,
He had, or fancied that he had;
Say, 'twas but in his own conceit—
The fancy made him glad!
Crown of his cup, and garnish of his dish,
The boon prefigured in his earliest wish,
The fair fulfilment of his poesy,
When his young heart first yearned for sympathy!

But e'en the meteor offspring of the brain
Unnourished wane;
Faith asks her daily bread,
And fancy must be fed.
Now so it chanced—from wet or dry,
It boots not how—I know not why—
She missed her wonted food; and quickly
Poor fancy staggered and grew sickly.
Then came a restless state, 'twixt yea and nay,
His faith was fixed, his heart all ebb and flow;
Or like a bark, in some half-sheltered bay,
Above its anchor driving to and fro.

That boon, which but to have possess
In a belief, gave life a zest—
Uncertain both what it had been,
And if by error lost, or luck;
And what it was;—an evergreen
Which some insidious blight had struck,
Or annual flower, which, past its blow,
No vernal spell shall e'er revive!
Uncertain, and afraid to know,

Doubts tossed him to and fro:
Hope keeping Love, Love, Hope, alive,
Like babes bewildered in the snow,

That cling and huddle from the cold
In hollow tree or ruined fold.

Those sparkling colours, once his boast,
Fading, one by one away,
Thin, and hueless as a ghost,
Poor fancy on her sick-bed lay ;
Ill at a distance, worse when near,
Telling her dreams to jealous fear !
Where was it then, the sociable sprite
That crowned the poet's cup and decked his dish !
Poor shadow cast from an unsteady wish,
Itself a substance by no other right
But that it intercepted reason's light ;
It dimmed his eye, it darkened on his brow,
A peevish mood, a tedious time, I trow !
Thank heaven ! 'tis not so now.

O bliss of blissful hours !
The boon of heaven's decreeing,
While yet in Eden's bowers
Dwelt the first husband and his sinless mate !
The one sweet plant, which, piteous heaven agreeing,
They bore with them through Eden's closing gate !
Of life's gay summer tide the sovran rose !
Late autumn's amaranth, that more fragrant blows
When passion's flowers all fall or fade ;
If this were ever his, in outward being,
Or but his own true love's projected shade,
Now that at length by certain proof he knows
That, whether real or a magic show,
Whate'er it was, it is no longer so ;
Though heart be lonesome, hope laid low,
Yet, lady, deem him not unblest ;
The certainty that struck hope dead
Hath left contentment in her stead :
And that is next to best !

And still finer, we think, than anything we have yet
given, is the following, entitled ' Love, Hope, and
Patience, in Education : '—

O'er wayward childhood would'st thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces ;

Love, Hope, and Patience, these must be thy graces,
 And in thine own heart let them first keep school.
 For, as old Atlas on his broad neck places
 Heaven's starry globe, and there sustains it;—so
 Do these upbear the little world below
 Of Education,—Patience, Love, and Hope.
 Methinks, I see them grouped in seemly show,
 The straitened arms upraised, the palms aslope,
 And robes that touching, as adown they flow,
 Distinctly blend, like snow embossed in snow.

O part them never ! If Hope prostrate lie,
 Love too will sink and die.
 But Love is subtle, and doth proof derive
 From her own life that Hope is yet alive ;
 And, bending o'er with soul-transfusing eyes,
 And the soft murmurs of the mother dove,
 Woos back the fleeting spirit, and half supplies :—
 Thus Love repays to Hope what Hope first gave to Love.

Yet haply there will come a weary day,
 When overtasked at length
 Both Love and Hope beneath the load give way.
 Then, with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,
 Stands the mute sister, Patience, nothing loth,
 And both supporting does the work of both.

SOUTHEY.

Coleridge died in 1834 ; his friend Southey, born three years later, survived to 1843. If Coleridge wrote too little poetry, Southey may be said to have written too much and too rapidly. Southey, as well as Coleridge, has been popularly reckoned one of the Lake poets ; but it is difficult to assign any meaning to that name which should entitle it to comprehend either the one or the other. Southey, indeed, was, in the commencement of his career, the associate of Wordsworth and Coleridge ; a portion of his first poem, his ' Joan of Arc,' published in 1796, was written by Coleridge ; and

he afterwards took up his residence, as well as Wordsworth, among the lakes of Westmoreland. But, although in his first volume of minor poems, published in 1797, there was something of the same simplicity or plainness of style, and choice of subjects from humble life, by which Wordsworth sought to distinguish himself about the same time, the manner of the one writer bore only a very superficial resemblance to that of the other; whatever it was, whether something quite original, or only, in the main, an inspiration caught from the Germans, that gave its peculiar character to Wordsworth's poetry, it was wanting in Southey's; he was evidently, with all his ingenuity and fertility, and notwithstanding an ambition of originality which led him to be continually seeking after strange models, from Arabian and Hindoo mythologies to Latin hexameters, of a genius radically imitative, and not qualified to put forth its strength except while moving in a beaten track and under the guidance of long established rules. Southey was by nature a conservative in literature as well as in politics, and the eccentricity of his 'Thalabas' and 'Kehamas' was as merely spasmodic as the Jacobinism of his 'Wat Tyler.' But even 'Thalaba' and 'Kehama,' whatever they may be, are surely not poems of the Lake school. And in most of his other poems, especially in his last epic, 'Roderick, the Last of the Goths,' Southey is in verse what he always was in prose, one of the most thoroughly and unaffectedly English of our modern writers. The verse, however, is too like prose to be poetry of a very high order; it is flowing and eloquent, but has little of the distinctive life or lustre of poetical composition. There is much splendour

beauty, however, in the 'Curse of Kehama,' the most elaborate of his long poems. As a specimen we will transcribe from the beginning of the Seventh Book or Canto the description of the voyage of the heroine, the lovely and virtuous Kailyal, through the air to the Swerga, or lowest heaven, with her preserver the Glend-over, or pure spirit, Ereenia :—

Then in the ship of heaven Ereenia laid
The waking, wondering maid ;
The ship of heaven, instinct with thought, displayed
Its living sail, and glides along the sky.
On either side, in wavy tide,
The clouds of morn along its path divide ;
The winds who swept in wild career on high
Before its presence check their charmed force ;
The winds that loitering lagged along their course
Around the living bark enamoured play,
Swell underneath the sail, and sing before its way.
That bark, in shape, was like the furrowed shell
Wherein the sea-nymphs to their parent-king,
On festal day, their duteous offerings bring.
Its hue?—Go watch the last green light
Ere evening yields the western star to night ;
Or fix upon the sun thy strenuous sight
Till thou hast reached its orb of chrysolite.
The sail, from end to end displayed,
Bent, like a rainbow, o'er the maid.
An angel's head, with visual eye,
Through trackless space directs its chosen way ;
Nor aid of wing, nor foot, nor fin,
Requires to voyage o'er the obedient sky.
Smooth as the swan when not a breeze at even
Disturbs the surface of the silver stream,
Through air and sunshine sails the ship of heaven.
Recumbent there the maiden glides along
On her ærial way,
How swift she feels not, though the swiftest wind
Had flagged in flight behind.
Motionless as a sleeping babe she lay,
And all serene in mind,

Feeling no fear ; for that ethereal air
With such new life and joyance filled her heart
Fear could not enter there ;
For sure she deemed her mortal part was o'er,
And she was sailing to the heavenly shore ;
And that angelic form, who moved beside,
Was some good spirit sent to be her guide.

Daughter of earth ! therein thou deem'st aright ;
And never yet did form more beautiful,
In dreams of night descending from on high,
Bless the religious Virgin's gifted sight,
Nor like a vision of delight
Rise on the raptured poet's inward eye.
Of human form divine was he,
The immortal youth of Heaven who floated by,
Even such as that divinest form shall be
In those blest stages of our onward race,
When no infirmity,
Low thought, nor base desire, nor wasting care,
Deface the semblance of our heavenly sire.

The wings of eagle or of cherubim
Had seemed unworthy him ;
Angelic power, and dignity and grace
Were in his glorious pennons ; from the neck
Down to the ankle reached their swelling web
Richer than robes of Tyrian dye, that deck
Imperial majesty :
Their colour like the winter's moonless sky,
When all the stars of midnight's canopy
Shine forth ; or like the azure steep at noon,
Reflecting back to heaven a brighter blue.
Such was their tint when closed ; but, when outspread,
The permeating light
Shed through their substance thin a varying hue ;
Now bright as when the rose,
Beauteous as fragrant, gives to scent and sight
A like delight ; now like the juice that flows
From Douro's generous vine ;
Or ruby, when with deepest red it glows ;
Or as the morning clouds refulgent shine,
When, at forthcoming of the lord of day,

The orient, like a shrine,
Kindles as it receives the rising ray,
And, heralding his way,
Proclaims the presence of the Power divine.

Thus glorious were the wings
Of that celestial spirit, as he went
Disporting through his native element.

Nor there alone

The gorgeous beauties that they gave to view ;
Through the broad membrane branched a pliant bone ;
Spreading like fibres from their parent stem,
Its veins like interwoven silver shone ;

Or as the chaster hue

Of pearls that grace some Sultan's diadem.
Now with slow stroke and strong behold him smite
The buoyant air, and now, in gentler flight,
On motionless wing expanded, shoot along.

Through air and sunshine sails the ship of heaven ;

Far, far beneath them lies

The gross and heavy atmosphere of earth ;

And with the Swerga gales

The maid of mortal birth

At every breath a new delight inhales.

And now toward its port the Ship of Heaven

Swift as a falling meteor shapes its flight,

Yet gently as the dews of night that gem

And do not bend the hare-bell's slenderest stem.

Daughter of earth, Ereenia cried, alight ;

This is thy place of rest, the Swerga this,

Lo, here my bower of bliss !

He furled his azure wings, which round him fold

Graceful as robes of Grecian chief of old.

The happy Kailyal knew not where to gaze ;

Her eyes around in joyful wonder roam,

Now turned upon the lovely Glendoveer,

Now on his heavenly home.

The affluence of imagery and gorgeousness of language here, and in other similar passages with which the poem abounds, is very imposing ; and it is not to be

denied that the descriptive power displayed is great. Yet the glow that warms and colours the composition is perhaps more that of eloquence than of poetry; or, at least, it is something rather borrowed or caught by imitation, and applied to the purpose in hand by dint of labour or mere general talent, than coming out of any strong original and peculiar poetic genius. The imagery, with all its copiousness and frequent magnificence and beauty, is still essentially commonplace in spirit and character, however strange in form much of it may seem; any apparent freshness it has lies for the most part merely in its Orientalism; whenever it is not outlandish, it is trite and tame; so that in this way when it is most natural it is least striking, and whenever it is very striking it is unnatural. Neither has it much real variety; it is chargeable at least with mannerism, if not with monotony; nor does it commonly penetrate through and through the thought, but rather only decorates it on the outside like a dress or lackering. There is, in short, a good deal in this Indian poetry of Southey's that recalls the artificial point and sparkle of that of Darwin, though the glare is less brazen and oppressive, and the execution altogether much more skilful, as well as the spirit far larger and more genial. It is rightly remarked, however, by the author himself in the preface to the last edition which he superintended of his 'Curse of Kehama,' that there is nothing Oriental in the style of the poem. By the style he here means simply the diction, including the verse. "I had learned," he adds, "the language of poetry from our own great masters and the great poets of antiquity." What of foreign inspiration, not derived from the common Greek and Latin

sources, there was in Southey's poetry, he drew, not, like some of the most remarkable of his contemporaries, from the modern literature of Germany, but from the old ballad and romantic minstrels of Spain.

SCOTT.

Walter Scott, again, was never accounted one of the Lake poets; yet he, as well as Wordsworth and Coleridge, was early a drinker at the fountain of German poetry; his commencing publication was a translation of Bürger's 'Lenore' (1796), and the spirit and manner of his original compositions were, from the first, evidently and powerfully influenced by what had thus awakened his poetical faculty. His robust and manly character of mind, however, and his strong nationalism, with the innate disposition of his imagination to live in the past rather than in the future, saved him from being seduced either into the puerilities or extravagances to which other imitators of the German writers among us were thought to have, more or less, given way; and, having soon found in the old ballad-poetry of his own country all the qualities which had most attracted him in his foreign favourites, with others which had an equal or still greater charm for his heart and fancy, he henceforth gave himself up almost exclusively to the more congenial inspiration of that native minstrelsy. His poems are all lays and romances of chivalry, but infinitely finer than any that had ever before been written. With all their irregularity and carelessness (qualities which in some sort are characteristic of and essential to this kind of poetry), that element of life in all writing, which comes

of the excited feeling and earnest belief of the writer, is never wanting; this animation, fervour, enthusiasm, call it by what name we will, exists in greater strength in no poetry than in that of Scott, redeeming a thousand defects, and triumphing over all the reclamations of criticism. It was this, no doubt, more than anything else, which at once took the public admiration by storm. All cultivated and perfect enjoyment of poetry, or of any other of the fine arts, is partly emotional, partly critical;* the enjoyment and appreciation are only perfect when these two qualities are blended; but most of the poetry that had been produced among us in modern times had aimed at affording chiefly, if not exclusively, a critical gratification. The 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' (1805) surprised readers of all degrees with a long and elaborate poem, which carried them onward with an excitement of heart as well as of head which they had scarcely ever experienced before in the perusal of poetry. The narrative form of the poem no doubt did much to produce this effect, giving to it, even without the poetry, the interest and enticement of a novel; but all readers, even the least tinctured with a literary taste, felt also, in a greater or less degree, the charm of the verse, and the poetic glow with which the work was all alive. 'Marmion' (1808) carried the same feelings to a much higher pitch; it is undoubtedly Scott's greatest poem, or the one at any rate in which the

* See, in an article on the 'State of Criticism in France,' in the *British and Foreign Review*, No. xxxii. (for January, 1844), a speculation on the distinction between these two states of feeling, which will be admitted to be ingenious, novel, and suggestive, even by those readers who do not go with the writer the whole length of his conclusions.

noblest passages are found; though the more domestic attractions of the 'Lady of the Lake' (1810) made it the most popular on its first appearance. Meanwhile, his success, the example he had set, and the tastes which he had awakened in the public mind, had affected our literature to an extent in various directions which has scarcely been sufficiently appreciated. Notwithstanding the previous appearance of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and some other writers, it was Scott who first in his day made poetry the rage, and with him properly commences the busy poetical production of the period we are now reviewing; those who had been in the field before him put on a new activity, and gave to the world their principal works, after his appearance; and it was not till then that the writer who of all the poets of this age attained the widest blaze of reputation, eclipsing Scott himself, commenced his career. But what is still more worthy of note is, that Scott's poetry impressed its own character upon all the poetry that was produced among us for many years after: it put an end to long works in verse of a didactic or merely reflective character, and directed the current of all writing of that kind into the form of narrative. Even Wordsworth's 'Excursion' (1814) is for the most part a collection of tales. If Scott's own genius, indeed, were to be described by any single epithet, it would be called a narrative genius. Hence, when he left off writing verse, he betook himself to the production of fictions in prose, which were really substantially the same thing with his poems, and in that freer form of composition succeeded in achieving a second reputation still more brilliant than his first.

We regret that we cannot make room for the whole of the battle in 'Marmion:' the following extracts, which describe the fighting, lose part of their effect by being separated from the picture of Marmion's death-scene, with the pathos and touching solemnity of which they are in the original canvass so finely intermingled and relieved; but, even deprived of the advantages of this contrast, most readers will probably agree with an eloquent living critic, that, "of all the poetical battles which have been fought from the days of Homer, there is none comparable for interest and animation—for breadth of drawing and magnificence of effect—with this:" *—

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
 With Lady Clare upon the hill;
 On which (for far the day was spent)
 The western sun-beams now were bent.
 The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
 Could plain their distant comrades view:
 Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
 "Unworthy office here to stay!
 No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
 But see! look up—on Flodden bent,
 The Scottish foe has fired his tent."

And sudden, as he spoke,
 From the sharp ridges of the hill,
 All downward to the banks of Till
 Was wreathed in sable smoke.
 Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
 The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
 As down the hill they broke;
 Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
 Announced their march; their tread alone,
 At times one warning trumpet blown,
 At times a stifled hum,
 Told England, from his mountain throne
 King James did rushing come.—

Scarce could they hear, or see, their foes
Until at weapon point they close.
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust ;
And such a yell was there
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air ;
O life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long looked the anxious squires ; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast.
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears ;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave ;

But nought distinct they see :
Wide raged the battle on the plain ;
Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain ;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain ;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly :
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight ;

Although against them come
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch man,
And many a rugged border clan,
With Huntley, and with Home.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle ;
Though there the western mountaineer
Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,

And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied.
'Twas vain:—but Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile cheered Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It wavered 'mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
"By Heaven, and all its saints! I swear
I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Followed by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose;—
But darkly closed the war around;
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
It sunk among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too, yet staid,
As loth to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rushed by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast,
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
And Stanley ! was the cry :—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye :
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted " Victory !"—
" Charge, Chester, charge ! On, Stanley, on !"
Were the last words of Marmion.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell ;
For still the Scots, around their king,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor van and wing ?
Where Huntley, and where Home ?
O, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Roland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died !
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar the royal standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
Our Caledonian pride !
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
" O lady," cried the Monk, " away !"
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.

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But, as they left the darkening heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hailed,
In headlong charge their horse assailed ;

Front, flank, and rear the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their king :
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though billmen ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring ;
The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight ;
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well ;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shattered bands ;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain waves from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know ;
Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swollen and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disordered, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land ;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong :
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield !

CRABBE.—CAMPBELL.—MOORE.

Crabbe, Campbell, and Moore were all known as

poetical writers previous to the breaking forth of Scott's bright day : Crabbe had published his first poem, ' The Library,' so far back as in 1781, ' The Village,' in 1783, and the ' Newspaper,' in 1785 ; Campbell, his ' Pleasures of Hope,' in 1799 ; Moore, his ' Anacreon,' in 1800. But Campbell alone had before that epoch attracted any considerable share of the public attention ; and even he, after following up his first long poem with his ' Hohenlinden,' his ' Battle of the Baltic,' his ' Mariners of England,' and a few other short pieces, had laid aside his lyre for some five or six years. Neither Crabbe nor Moore had as yet produced anything that gave promise of the high station they were to attain in our poetical literature, or had even acquired any general notoriety as writers of verse. No one of the three, however, can be said to have caught any part of his manner from Scott. Campbell's first poem, juvenile as its execution in some respects was, evinced in its glowing impetuosity and imposing splendour of declamation the genius of a true and original poet, and the same general character that distinguishes his poetry in its maturest form, which may be described as a combination of fire and elegance ; and his early lyrics, at least in their general effect, are not excelled by anything he subsequently wrote, although the tendency of his style towards greater purity and simplicity was very marked in all his later compositions. It was with a narrative poem—his ' Pennsylvanian Tale' of ' Gertrude of Wyoming'—that Campbell (in 1809) returned to woo the public favour, after Scott had made poetry, and that particular form of it, so popular ; and, continuing to obey the direction which had been given to the public taste, he afterwards produced his exquisite

‘ O’Connor’s Child ’ and his ‘ Theodric ; ’ the former the most passionate, the latter the purest of all his poems. Crabbe, in like manner, when he at last, in 1807, broke his silence of twenty years, came forth with a volume, all that was new in which consisted of narrative poetry, and he never afterwards attempted any other style. Narrative, indeed, had formed the happiest and most characteristic portions of Crabbe’s former compositions ; and he was probably led now to resume his pen mainly by the turn which the taste and fashion of the time had taken in favour of the kind of poetry to which his genius most strongly carried him. His narrative manner, however, it is scarcely necessary to observe, has no resemblance either to that of Scott or to that of Campbell. Crabbe’s poetry, indeed, both in its form and in its spirit, is of quite a peculiar and original character. It might be called the poetry of matter-of-fact, for it is as true as any prose, and, except the rhyme, has often little about it of the ordinary dress of poetry ; but the effect of poetry, nevertheless, is always there in great force, its power both of stirring the affections and presenting vivid pictures to the fancy. Other poets may be said to exalt the truth to a heat naturally foreign to it in the crucible of their imagination ; he, by a subtler chemistry, draws forth from it its latent heat, making even things that look the coldest and deadest sparkle and flash with passion. It is remarkable, however, in how great a degree, with all its originality, the poetical genius of Crabbe was acted upon and changed by the growth of new tastes and a new spirit in the times through which he lived,—how his poetry took a warmer temperament, a richer colour, as

the age became more poetical. As he lived, indeed, in two eras, so he wrote in two styles : the first, a sort of imitation, as we have already observed, of the rude vigour of Churchill, though marked from the beginning by a very distinguishing quaintness and raciness of its own, but comparatively cautious and commonplace, and dealing rather with the surface than with the heart of things ; the last, with all the old peculiarities retained, and perhaps exaggerated, but greatly more copious, daring, and impetuous, and infinitely improved in penetration and general effectiveness. And his poetical power, nourished by an observant spirit and a thoughtful tenderness of nature, continued to grow in strength to the end of his life ; so that the last poetry he published, his 'Tales of the Hall,' is the finest he ever wrote, the deepest and most passionate in feeling as well as the happiest in execution. In Crabbe's sunniest passages, however, the glow is still that of a melancholy sunshine ; compared to what we find in Moore's poetry, it is like the departing flush from the west, contrasted with the radiance of morning poured out plentifully over earth and sky, and making all things laugh in light. Rarely has there been seen so gay, nimble, airy a wonder-worker in verse as Moore ; rarely such a conjuror with words, which he makes to serve rather as wings for his thoughts than as the gross attire or embodiment with which they must be encumbered to render them palpable or visible. His wit is not only the sharpest and brightest to be almost anywhere found, but is produced apparently with more of natural facility, and shapes itself into expression more spontaneously, than that of any other poet. But there is almost as much humour as

wit in Moore's gaiety ; nor are his wit and humour together more than a small part of his poetry, which, preserving in all its forms the same matchless brilliancy, finish, and apparent ease and fluency, breathes in its tenderer strains the very soul of sweetness and pathos. Moore, after having risen to the ascendant in his proper region of the poetical firmament, at last followed the rest into the walk of narrative poetry, and produced his ' *Lalla Rookh* ' (1817) : it is a poem, with all its defects, abounding in passages of great beauty and splendour ; but his Songs are, after all, probably, the compositions for which he will be best remembered.

No poetry of the day is probably so deeply and universally written upon the popular heart and memory as Campbell's great lyrics ; these, therefore, it is needless to give here ; some things that he has written in another style will have a greater chance of being new to the generality of our readers. With all his classic taste and careful finish, Campbell's writing, especially in his earlier poetry, is rarely altogether free for any considerable number of lines from something hollow and false in expression, into which he was seduced by the conventional habits of the preceding bad school of verse-making in which he had been partly trained, and from which he emerged, or by the gratification of his ear lulling his other faculties asleep for the moment ; even in his ' *Battle of the Baltic*,' for instance, what can be worse than the two lines—

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene ?

And a similar use of fine words with little or no meaning, or with a meaning which can only be forced out of

them by torture, is occasional in all his early compositions. In the 'Pleasures of Hope,' especially, swell of sound without any proportionate quantity of sense, is of such frequent occurrence as to be almost a characteristic of the poem. All his later poetry, however, is of much purer execution; and some of it is of exquisite delicacy and grace of form. A little incident was never, for example, more perfectly told than in the following verses:—

The ordeal's fatal trumpet sounded,
And sad pale Adelgitha came,
When forth a valiant champion bounded,
And slew the slanderer of her fame.

She wept, delivered from her danger;
But, when he knelt to claim her glove—
"Seek not," she cried, "oh! gallant stranger,
For hapless Adelgitha's love.

"For he is in a foreign far land
Whose arm should now have set me free;
And I must wear the willow garland
For him that's dead or false to me."

"Nay! say not that his faith is tainted!"
He raised his vizor—at the sight
She fell into his arms and fainted;
It was indeed her own true knight.

Equally perfect, in a higher, more earnest style, is the letter to her absent husband dictated and signed by Constance in her last moments, which closes the tale of 'Theodric':—

"Theodric, this is destiny above
Our power to baffle; bear it then, my love!
Rave not to learn the usage I have borne,
—one true sister left me not forlorn;

And, though you're absent in another land,
 Sent from me by my own well-meant command,
 Your soul, I know, as firm is knit to mine
 As these clasped hands in blessing you now join :
 Shape not imagined horrors in my fate—
 Even now my sufferings are not very great ;
 And, when your grief's first transports shall subside,
 I call upon your strength of soul and pride
 To pay my memory, if 'tis worth the debt,
 Love's glorying tribute—not forlorn regret :
 I charge my name with power to conjure up
 Reflection's balmy, not its bitter, cup.
 My pardoning angel, at the gates of heaven,
 Shall look not more regard than you have given
 To me ; and our life's union has been clad
 In smiles of bliss as sweet as life e'er had.
 Shall gloom be from such bright remembrance cast ?
 Shall bitterness outflow from sweetness past ?
 No ! imaged in the sanctuary of your breast,
 There let me smile, amidst high thoughts at rest ;
 And let contentment on your spirit shine,
 As if its peace were still a part of mine :
 For, if you war not proudly with your pain,
 For you I shall have worse than lived in vain.
 But I conjure your manliness to bear
 My loss with noble spirit—not despair ;
 I ask you by our love to promise this,
 And kiss these words, where I have left a kiss,—
 The latest from my living lips for yours.”

Words that will solace him while life endures :
 For, though his spirit from affliction's surge
 Could ne'er to life, as life had been, emerge,
 Yet still that mind, whose harmony elate
 Rang sweetness even beneath the crush of fate,—
 That mind in whose regard all things were placed
 In views that softened them, or light that graced,—
 That soul's example could not but dispense
 A portion of its own blest influence ;
 Invoking him to peace and that self-sway
 Which fortune cannot give, nor take away :
 And, though he mourned her long, 'twas with such woe
 As if her spirit watched him still below.

It is difficult to find a single passage, not too long for the space we can afford, which will convey any tolerable notion of the power and beauty of Crabbe's poetry, where so much of the effect lies in the conduct of the narrative—in the minute and prolonged, but wonderfully skilful as well as truthful pursuit and exposition of the course and vicissitude of passions and circumstances ; but we will try to present so much of the story of the Elder Brother, in the 'Tales of the Hall,' as may at least make the catastrophe intelligible. We select this tale, among other reasons, for its containing one of those pre-eminently beautiful lyric bursts which seem to contrast so strangely with the general spirit and manner of Crabbe's poetry. After many years the narrator, pursuing another inquiry, accidentally discovers the lost object of his heart's passionate but pure idolatry living in infamy :—

Will you not ask, how I beheld that face,
Or read that mind, and read it in that place ?
I have tried, Richard, oftentimes, and in vain,
To trace my thoughts, and to review their train—
If train there were—that meadow, grove, and stile,
The fright, the escape, her sweetness, and her smile ;
Years since elapsed, and hope, from year to year,
To find her free—and then to find her here !

But is it she ?—O ! yes ; the rose is dead,
All beauty, fragrance, freshness, glory, fled ;
But yet 'tis she—the same and not the same—
Who to my bower a heavenly being came ;
Who waked my soul's first thought of real bliss,
Whom long I sought, and now I find her—this.

I cannot paint her—something I had seen
So pale and slim, and tawdry and unclean ;
With haggard looks, of vice and woe the prey,
Laughing in languor, miserably gay :

Her face, where face appeared, was amply spread,
 By art's warm pencil, with ill-chosen red,
 The flower's fictitious bloom, the blushing of the dead :
 But still the features were the same, and strange
 My view of both—the sameness and the change,
 That fixed me gazing, and my eye enchained,
 Although so little of herself remained ;
 It is the creature whom I loved, and yet
 Is far unlike her—would I could forget
 The angel or her fall ; the once adored
 Or now despised ! the worshipped or deplored !
 “ O ! Rosabella ! ” I prepared to say,
 “ Whom I have loved ; ” but Prudence whispered, Nay,
 And Folly grew ashamed—Discretion had her day.
 She gave her hand ; which, as I lightly pressed,
 The cold but ardent grasp my soul oppressed ;
 The ruined girl disturbed me, and my eyes
 Looked, I conceive, both sorrow and surprise.

If words had failed, a look explained their style ;
 She could not blush assent, but she could smile :
 Good heaven ! I thought, have I rejected fame,
 Credit, and wealth, for one who smiles at shame ?

She saw me thoughtful—saw it, as I guessed,
 With some concern, though nothing she expressed.
 “ Come, my dear friend, discard that look of care,” &c.

Thus spoke the siren in voluptuous style,
 While I stood gazing and perplexed the while,
 Chained by that voice, confounded by that smile.
 And then she sang, and changed from grave to gay,
 Till all reproach and anger died away.

“ My Damon was the first to wake
 The gentle flame that cannot die ;
 My Damon is the last to take
 The faithful bosom's softest sigh :
 The life between is nothing worth,
 O ! cast it from thy thought away ;
 Think of the day that gave it birth,
 And this its sweet returning day.

"Buried be all that has been done,
 Or say that nought is done amiss;
 For who the dangerous path can shun
 In such bewildering world as this?
 But love can every fault forgive,
 Or with a tender look reprove;
 And now let nought in memory live,
 But that we meet, and that we love."

And then she moved my pity; for she wept,
 And told her miseries, till resentment slept;
 For, when she saw she could not reason blind,
 She poured her heart's whole sorrows on my mind,
 With features graven on my soul, with sighs
 Seen but not heard, with soft imploring eyes,
 And voice that needed not, but had, the aid
 Of powerful words to soften and persuade.

"O! I repent me of the past;" &c.

Softened, I said, "Be mine the hand and heart,
 If with your world you will consent to part."
 She would—she tried.—Alas! she did not know
 How deeply-rooted evil habits grow:
 She felt the truth upon her spirits press,
 But wanted ease, indulgence, show, excess,
 Voluptuous banquets, pleasures—not refined,
 But such as soothe to sleep the opposing mind—
 She looked for idle vice, the time to kill,
 And subtle, strong apologies for ill.
 And thus her yielding, unresisting soul
 Sank, and let sin confuse her and control:
 Pleasures that brought disgust yet brought relief,
 And minds she hated helped to war with grief.

I had long lost her; but I sought in vain
 To banish pity;—still she gave me pain.

——— There came at length request
 That I would see a wretch with grief oppressed,
 By guilt affrighted—and I went to trace
 Once more the vice-worn features of that face,

That sin-wrecked being ! and I saw her laid
 Where never worldly joy a visit paid :
 That world receding fast ! the world to come
 Concealed in terror, ignorance, and gloom ;
 Sins, sorrow, and neglect : with not a spark
 Of vital hope,—all horrible and dark.—
 It frightened me !—I thought, and shall not I
 Thus feel ?—thus fear ?—this danger can I fly ?
 Do I so wisely live that I can calmly die ?

Still as I went came other change—the frame
 And features wasted, and yet slowly came
 The end ; and so inaudible the breath,
 And still the breathing, we exclaimed—'Tis death !
 But death it was not : when indeed she died
 I sat and his last gentle stroke espied :
 When—as it came—or did my fancy trace
 That lively, lovely flushing o'er the face ?
 Bringing back all that my young heart impressed !
 It came—and went !—She sighed, and was at rest !

From Moore, happily still a living poet, and one whose works are in the hands of all, we will make only one short extract—a specimen of his brilliant Orientalism, which may be compared with that of Southey's in a preceding page. Here is the exquisitely beautiful description in the *Fire Worshippers*, the finest of the four tales composing '*Lalla Rookh*,' of the calm after a storm, in which the heroine, the gentle Hinda, awakens in the war-bark of her lover Hafed, the noble Gheber chief, into which she had been transferred from her own galley while she had swooned with terror from the tempest and the fight :—

How calm, how beautiful comes on
 The stilly hour when storms are gone !
 When warring winds have died away,
 And clouds, beneath the dancing ray,

Melt off, and leave the land and sea
Sleeping in bright tranquillity—
Fresh as if day again were born,
Again upon the lap of morn !
When the light blossoms, rudely torn
And scattered at the whirlwind's will,
Hang floating in the pure air still,
Filling it all with precious balm,
In gratitude for this sweet calm :—
And every drop the thunder-showers
Have left upon the grass and flowers
Sparkles, as 'twere that lightning gem
Whose liquid flame is born of them !

When, 'stead of one unchanging breeze,
There blow a thousand gentle airs,
And each a different perfume bears,—
As if the loveliest plants and trees
Had vassal breezes of their own,
To watch and wait on them alone,
And waft no other breath than theirs !
When the blue waters rise and fall,
In sleepy sunshine mantling all ;
And even that swell the tempest leaves
Is like the full and silent heavens
Of lovers' hearts when newly blest—
Too newly to be quite at rest !
Such was the golden hour that broke
Upon the world, when Hinda woke
From her long trance, and heard around
No motion but the water's sound
Rippling against the vessel's side,
As slow it mounted o'er the tide.—
But where is she?—her eyes are dark,
Are wildered still—is this the bark,
The same that from Harmozia's bay
Bore her at morn—whose bloody way
The sea-dog tracks?—No ! strange and new
Is all that meets her wondering view.
Upon a galliot's deck she lies,
Beneath no rich pavilion's shade,
No plumes to fan her sleeping eyes,
Nor jasmin on her pillow laid.

But the rude litter, roughly spread
 With war-cloaks, is her homely bed,
 And shawl and sash, on javelins hung,
 For awning o'er her head are flung.
 Shuddering she looked around—there lay

A group of warriors in the sun
 Resting their limbs, as for that day
 Their ministry of death were done;
 Some gazing on the drowsy sea,
 Lost in unconscious reverie;
 And some, who seemed but ill to brook
 That sluggish calm, with many a look
 To the slack sail impatient cast,
 As loose it flagged before the mast.

BYRON.

Byron was the writer whose blaze of popularity it mainly was that threw Scott's name into the shade, and induced him to abandon verse. Yet the productions which had this effect—the 'Giaour,' the 'Bride of Abydos,' the 'Corsair,' &c., published in 1813 and 1814 (for the new idolatry was scarcely kindled by the two respectable, but somewhat tame, cantos of 'Childe Harold,' in quite another style, which appeared shortly before these effusions), were, in reality, only poems written in what may be called a variation of Scott's own manner—Oriental lays and romances, Turkish Marmions and Ladies of the Lake. The novelty of scene and subject, the exaggerated tone of passion in the outlandish tales, and a certain trickery in the writing (for it will hardly now be called anything else), materially aided by the mysterious interest attaching to the personal history of the noble bard, who, whether he sung of Giaours, or Corsairs, or Laras, was always popularly believed to be "himself the great sublime he drew," wonderfully excited and intoxicated the public mir-

first, and for a time made all other poetry seem tame and wearisome ; but, if Byron had adhered to the style by which his fame was thus originally made, it probably would have proved transient enough. Few will now be found to assert that there is anything in these earlier poems of his comparable to the great passages in those of Scott—to the battle in ‘Marmion,’ for instance, or the raising of the clansmen by the fiery cross in the ‘Lady of the Lake,’ or many others that might be mentioned: But Byron’s vigorous and elastic genius, although it had already tried various styles of poetry, was, in truth, as yet only preluding to its proper display. First, there had been the very small note of the ‘Hours of Idleness ;’ then, the sharper, but not more original or much more promising, strain of the ‘English Bards and Scotch Reviewers’ (a satirical attempt in all respects inferior to Gifford’s ‘Baviad and Mæviad,’ of which it was a slavish imitation) ; next, the certainly far higher and more matured, but quiet and somewhat commonplace, manner of the two first cantos of ‘Childe Harold ;’ after that, suddenly the false glare and preternatural vehemence of these Oriental rhapsodies, which yet, however, with all their hollowness and extravagance, evinced infinitely more power than anything he had previously done, or rather were the only poetry he had yet produced that gave proof of any remarkable poetic genius. The ‘Prisoner of Chillon’ and ‘Parisina,’ the ‘Siege of Corinth’ and ‘Mazeppa,’ followed, all in a spirit of far more truth, and depth, and beauty than the other tales that had preceded them ; but the highest forms of Byron’s poetry must be sought for in the two last cantos of ‘Childe Harold,’ in his ‘Cain’ and ‘Manfred,’ and,

above all, in his 'Don Juan.' The last-mentioned extraordinary work, unfinished as it is, may justly claim to be accounted on the whole the greatest English poem produced in the present century, or indeed in the preceding. It contains some, nay, much poetry, as high as is to be found in any other, and no other displays a poetic genius nearly so rich and various—so great in the most opposite kinds of writing, from the lightest play of wit and satire up to the noblest strains of impassioned song. We will give the letter of Julia to Juan in the First Canto, which may be compared with the letter of Constance in Campbell's 'Theodric,' given a few pages back :—

They tell me 'tis decided; you depart;
 'Tis wise—'tis well, but not the less a pain;
 I have no further claim on your young heart;
 Mine is the victim, and would be again;
 To love too much has been the only art
 I used;—I write in haste, and, if a stain
 Be on this sheet, 'tis not what it appears;
 My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

I loved, I love you, for this love have lost
 State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem,
 And yet cannot regret what it hath cost,
 So dear is still the memory of that dream;
 Yet, if I name my guilt, 'tis not to boast;
 None can deem harshlier of me than I deem;
 I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest—
 I've nothing to reproach, or to request.

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart;
 'Tis woman's whole existence;—man may range
 The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;
 Sword, gown, gain, glory offer in exchange
 Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
 And few there are whom these cannot estrange
 Men have all these resources, we but one,—
 To love again, and be again undone.

You will proceed in pleasure and in pride,
Beloved, and loving many ; all is o'er
For me on earth, except some years to hide
My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core ;
These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
The passion which still rages as before ;
And so farewell—forgive me, love me—No,
That word is idle now, but let it go.

My breast has been all weakness, is so yet ;
But still I think I can collect my mind ;
My blood still rushes where my spirits set,
As roll the waves before the settled wind ;
My heart is feminine, nor can forget—
To all, except one image, madly blind ;
So shakes the needle, and so stands the pole,
As vibrates my fond heart to my fixed soul.

I have no more to say, but linger still,
And dare not set my seal upon this sheet ;
And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
My misery can scarce be more complete ;
I had not lived till now could sorrow kill :
Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet,
And I must even survive this last adieu,
And bear with life to love and pray for you !

SHELLEY.

Yet the highest poetical genius of this time, if it was not that of Coleridge, was, perhaps, that of Shelley. Byron died in 1824, at the age of thirty-six ; Shelley in 1822, at that of twenty-nine. What Shelley produced during the brief term allotted to him on earth, much of it passed in sickness and sorrow, is remarkable for its quantity, but much more wonderful for the quality of the greater part of it. His ' Queen Mab,' written when he was eighteen, crude and defective as it is, and unworthy to be classed with what he wrote in his maturer years, was probably the richest promise that was ever

given at so early an age of poetic power, the fullest assurance that the writer was born a poet. From the date of his 'Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude,' the earliest written of the poems published by himself, to his death, was not quite seven years. 'The Revolt of Islam,' in twelve cantos, or books, the dramas of 'Prometheus Unbound,' 'The Cenci,' and 'Hellas,' the tale of 'Rosalind and Helen,' 'The Masque of Anarchy,' 'The Sensitive Plant,' 'Julian and Maddalo,' 'The Witch of Atlas,' 'Epipsychidion,' 'Adonais,' 'The Triumph of Life,' the translations of Homer's 'Hymn to Mercury,' of the 'Cyclops' of Euripides, and of the scenes from Calderon and from Goethe's 'Faust,' besides many short poems, were the additional produce of this springtime of a life destined to know no summer. So much poetry, so rich in various beauty, was probably never poured forth with so rapid a flow from any other mind. Nor can much of it be charged with either immaturity or carelessness; Shelley, with all his abundance and facility, was a fastidious writer, scrupulously attentive to the effect of words and syllables, and accustomed to elaborate whatever he wrote to the utmost; and, although it is not to be doubted that if he had lived longer he would have developed new powers and a still more masterly command over the several resources of his art, anything that can properly be called unripeness in his composition had, if not before, ceased with his 'Revolt of Islam,' the first of his poems which he gave to the world, as if the exposure to the public eye had burned it out. Some haziness of thought and uncertainty of expression may be found in some of his later, or even latest, works; but that is not to be confounded with

rawness ; it is the dreamy ecstasy, too high for speech, in which his poetical nature, most subtle, sensitive, and voluptuous, delighted to dissolve and lose itself. Yet it is marvellous how far he had succeeded in reconciling even this mood of thought with the necessities of distinct expression : we would quote his ‘ *Epipsychidion* ’ (written in the last year of his life) as his crowning triumph in that kind of writing, and as, indeed, for its wealth and fusion of all the highest things—of imagination, of expression, of music,—one of the greatest miracles ever wrought in poetry. In other styles, again, all widely diverse, are the ‘ *Cenci*,’ the ‘ *Masque of Anarchy*,’ the ‘ *Hymn to Mercury* ’ (formally a translation, but essentially almost as much an original composition as any of the others). It is hard to conjecture what would have been impossible to him by whom all this had been done.

Here is one of the most brilliant and characteristic of Shelley’s shorter poems—his Ode, or Hymn, as it may be called, ‘ *To a Skylark*,’ written in 1820 :—

Hail to thee, blithe spirit,
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest ;
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O’er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run ;
— ‘ *Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.*’

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight ;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight,
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not :
What is most like thee ?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

Like a highborn maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its ærial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the
view :

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,

By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged
thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass,
Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine ;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain ?
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
What shapes of sky or plain ?
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be :
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee :
Thou lovest ; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not ;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow,
 The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

KEATS.

Keats, born in 1796, died the year before Shelley, and, of course, at a still earlier age. But his poetry is younger than Shelley's in a degree beyond the difference of their years. He was richly endowed by nature with the poetical faculty, and all that he has written is stamped with originality and power; it is probable, too, that he would soon have supplied, as far as was necessary or important, the defects of his education, as indeed he had actually done to a considerable extent, for he was full of ambition as well as genius; but he can scarcely be said to have given assurance by anything he has left that he might in time have produced a great poetical work. The character of his mental constitution, explosive and volcanic, was adverse to every kind of restraint and cultivation; and his poetry is a tangled forest, beautiful indeed and glorious with many a majestic oak and sunny glade, but still with the unpruned, untrained

savagery everywhere, which it could not lose without ceasing altogether to be what it is. Keats's 'Endymion' was published in 1817; his 'Lamia,' 'Isabella,' 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' and 'Hyperion,' together in 1820. The latter volume also contained several shorter pieces, one of which of great beauty, the 'Ode to a Nightingale,' may serve as a companion to Shelley's 'Skylark :—

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-ward had sunk :
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness,—
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage that hath been
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth !
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blissful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth ;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs ;
 Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 'Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
 Already with thee ! Tender in the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Clustered around by all her starry fays ;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But in embalmed darkness guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
 Fast-fading violets, covered up in leaves ;
 And mid-day's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eve.

Darkling I listen, and, for many a time,
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,*
 Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath ;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To seize upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy !
 Still would'st thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;

* Shelley had probably this line in his ear, when in the Preface to his *Adonais*, which is an elegy on Keats, he wrote—describing “the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants” at Rome, where his friend was buried—“The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet place.”

The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown ;
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my soul's self !
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music :—do I wake or sleep ?

HUNT.

These last names can hardly be mentioned without suggesting another—that of one who still remains among us, and it is to be hoped with yet many years before him in which to live and write. Leigh Hunt, the friend of Shelley and Keats, had attracted the attention of the world by much that he had done, both in verse and prose, long before the appearance of either. Whatever may be thought of some peculiarities in his manner of writing, nobody will now be found to dispute either the originality of his genius, or his claim to the title of a true poet. Into whatever he has written he has put a living soul ; and much of what he has produced is brilliant either with wit and humour, or with tenderness and beauty. In some of the best of his pieces too there is scarcely to be found a trace of anything illegitimate or

doubtful in the matter of diction or versification. Where, for example, can we have more unexceptionable English than in the following noble version of the Eastern Tale?—

There came a man, making his hasty moan,
Before the Sultan Mahmoud on his throne,
And crying out—"My sorrow is my right,
And I *will* see the Sultan, and to-night."
"Sorrow," said Mahmoud, "is a reverend thing;
I recognise its right, as king with king;
Speak on." "A fiend has got into my house,"
Exclaimed the staring man, "and tortures us;
One of thine officers—he comes, the abhorred,
And takes possession of my house, my board,
My bed:—I have two daughters and a wife,
And the wild villain comes, and makes me mad with life."
"Is he there now?" said Mahmoud:—"No; he left
The house when I did, of my wits bereft;
And laughed me down the street, because I vowed
I'd bring the prince himself to lay him in his shroud.
I'm mad with want—I'm mad with misery,
And, oh thou Sultan Mahmoud, God cries out for thee!"

The Sultan comforted the man, and said,
"Go home, and I will send thee wine and bread,"
(For he was poor) "and other comforts. Go;
And, should the wretch return, let Sultan Mahmoud
know."

In three days' time, with haggard eyes and beard,
And shaken voice, the suitor re-appeared,
And said, "He's come."—Mahmoud said not a word,
But rose and took four slaves, each with a sword,
And went with the vexed man. They reach the place,
And hear a voice, and see a female face,
That to the window fluttered in affright:
"Go in," said Mahmoud, "and put out the light;
But tell the females first to leave the room;
And, when the drunkard follows them, we come."

The man went in. There was a cry, and hark!
A table falls, the window is struck dark:

Forth rush the breathless women ; and behind
With curses comes the fiend in desperate mind.
In vain : the sabres soon cut short the strife,
And chop the shrieking wretch, and drink his bloody life.

"Now *light* the light," the Sultan cried aloud.
'Twas done ; he took it in his hand, and bowed
Over the corpse, and looked upon the face ;
Then turned and knelt beside it in the place,
And said a prayer, and from his lips there crept
Some gentle words of pleasure, and he wept.

In reverent silence the spectators wait,
Then bring him at his call both wine and meat ;
And, when he had refreshed his noble heart,
He bade his host be blest, and rose up to depart.

The man amazed, all mildness now, and tears,
Fell at the Sultan's feet, with many prayers,
And begged him to vouchsafe to tell his slave
The reason, first, of that command he gave
About the light ; then, when he saw the face,
Why he knelt down ; and lastly, how it was
That fare so poor as his detained him in the place.

The Sultan said, with much humanity,
"Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
I could not rid me of a dread, that one
By whom such daring villanies were done
Must be some lord of mine, perhaps a lawless son.
Whoe'er he was, I knew my task, but feared
A father's heart, in case the worst appeared ;
For this I had the light put out ; but when
I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
I knelt, and thanked the sovereign arbiter,
Whose work I had performed through pain and fear ;
And then I rose, and was refreshed with food,
The first time since thou cam'st, and marr'dst my soli-
tude."

But the following, only recently published, is more in
this poet's usual manner, and attests, we think, as power-
fully as anything he has ever produced, the master's
triumphant hand, in a style which he has made his own,

and in which, with however many imitators, he has no rival :—

THE FANCY CONCERT.

They talked of their concerts, their singers, and scores,
And pitied the fever that kept me in doors;
And I smiled in my thought, and said, “O ye sweet
fancies,
And animal spirits, that still in your dances
Come bringing me visions to comfort my care,
Now fetch me a concert,—imparadise air.”

Then a wind, like a storm out of Eden, came pouring
Fierce into my room, and made tremble the flooring,
And filled, with a sudden impetuous trample
Of heaven, its corners; and swelled it to ample
Dimensions to breathe in, and space for all power;
Which falling as suddenly, lo! the sweet flower
Of an exquisite fairy-voice opened its blessing;
And ever and aye, to its constant addressing,
There came, falling in with it, each in the last,
Flageolets one by one, and flutes blowing more fast,
And hautboys and clarinets, acrid of reed,
And the violin, smoothlier sustaining the speed
As the rich tempest gathered, and buz-ringing moons
Of tambours, and huge basses, and giant bassoons;
And the golden trombone, that darteth its tongue
Like a bee of the gods; nor was absent the gong,
Like a sudden fate-bringing oracular sound
Of earth's iron genius, burst up from the ground,
A terrible slave come to wait on his masters
The gods, with exultings that clanged like disasters;
And then spoke the organs, the very gods they,
Like thunders that roll on a wind-blowing day;
And, taking the rule of the roar in their hands,
Lo! the Genii of Music came out of all lands;
And one of them said, “Will my lord tell his slave
What concert 'twould please his Firesideship to have?”

Then I said in a tone of immense will and pleasure,
“Let orchestras rise to some exquisite measure;
And let there be lights and be odours; and let
The lovers of music serenely be set;

And then, with their singers in lily-white stoles,
And themselves clad in rose-colour, fetch me the souls
Of all the composers accounted divinest,
And, with their own hands, let them play me their finest."

Then, lo ! was performed my immense will and pleasure,
And orchestras rose to an exquisite measure ;
And lights were about me and odours ; and set
Were the lovers of music, all wondrously met ;
And then, with their singers in lily-white stoles,
And themselves clad in rose-colour, in came the souls
Of all the composers accounted divinest,
And, with their own hands, did they play me their finest.

Oh ! truly was Italy heard then, and Germany,
Melody's heart, and the rich brain of harmony ;
Pure Paisiello, whose airs are as new,
Though we know them by heart, as May-blossoms and
dew ;

And nature's twin son, Pergolesi ; and Bach,
Old father of fugues, with his endless fine talk ;
And Gluck, who saw gods ; and the learned sweet feeling
Of Haydn ; and Winter, whose sorrows are healing ;
And gentlest Corelli, whose bowing seems made
For a hand with a jewel ; and Handel, arrayed
In Olympian thunders, vast lord of the spheres,
Yet pious himself, with his blindness in tears,
A lover withal, and a conqueror, whose marches
Bring demi-gods under victorious arches ;
Then Arne, sweet and tricksome ; and masterly Purcell,
Lay-clerical soul ; and Mozart universal,
But chiefly with exquisite gallantries found,
With a grove in the distance of holier sound ;
Nor forgot was thy dulcitude, loving Sacchini ;
Nor love, young and dying, in shape of Bellini ;
Nor Weber, nor Himmel, nor Mirth's sweetest name,
Cimarosa ; much less the great organ-voiced fame
Of Marcello, that hushed the Venetian sea ;
And strange was the shout, when it wept, hearing thee,
Thou soul full of grace as of grief, my heart-cloven,
My poor, my most rich, my all-feeling Beethoven.
O'er all, like a passion, great Pasta was heard,
As high as her heart, that truth-uttering bird ;

And Banti was there ; and Grassini, that goddess !
 Dark, deep-toned, large, lovely, with glorious boddice ;
 And Mara ; and Malibran, stung to the tips
 Of her fingers with pleasure ; and rich Fodor's lips
 And, manly in face as in tone, Angrisani ;
 And Naldi, thy whim ; and thy grace, Tramezzani ;
 And was it a voice ?—or what was it ?—say—
 That, like a fallen angel beginning to pray,
 Was the soul of all tears and celestial despair !
 Paganini it was, 'twixt his dark-flowing hair.

So now we had instrument, now we had song—
 Now chorus, a thousand-voiced one-hearted throng ;
 Now pauses that pampered resumption, and now—
 But who shall describe what was played us, or how ?
 'Twas wonder, 'twas transport, humility, pride ;
 'Twas the heart of the mistress that sat by one's side ;
 'Twas the graces invisible, moulding the air
 Into all that is shapely, and lovely, and fair,
 And running our fancies their tenderest rounds
 Of endearments and luxuries, turned into sounds ;
 'Twas argument even, the logic of tones ;
 'Twas memory, 'twas wishes, 'twas laughters, 'twas moans ;
 'Twas pity and love, in pure impulse obeyed ;
 'Twas the breath of the stuff of which passion is made.

And these are the concerts I have at my will ;
 Then dismiss them, and patiently think of your "bill."—
 (*Aside*) Yet Lablache, after all, makes me long to go, still.

OTHER POETICAL WRITERS.

But we can indulge in no more extracts or detailed criticism. The names we have mentioned are the chief belonging to the period included within our review, which must be understood as coming down only to about the close of the reign of George the Third. Many others, however, also brighten this age of our poetical literature, which must here be dismissed with a mere enumeration :—Rogers, Bowles, Charles Lamb, Professor

Wilson, the Ettrick Shepherd (Hogg), Allan Cunningham, Tennant (the author of 'Anster Fair'), Hector M'Niel, Tannahill, Grahame (the author of 'The Sabbath'), Leyden, Thomas Pringle, M. G. Lewis, Robert Bloomfield, Henry Kirke White, James Montgomery, John Clare, Lord Thurlow, Lord Strangford, Sir Eger-ton Brydges, Shee, Frere, Savage Landor, Maturin, Procter (Barry Cornwall), James and Horace Smith (authors of the 'Rejected Addresses'), Milman, Heber, Herbert, Wolfe (author of the lines on the burial of Sir John Moore), Miss Baillie, Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Opie, Mrs. Tighe, Miss Mitford, Mrs. Hemans, &c. Some of these, indeed, may merit no higher designation than that of agreeable or elegant versifiers; but others, both among those that have passed away and those that are still among us, will live in the language as true poets, and will be allowed to have received no stinted measure of the divine gift of song.

On the whole this space of about half a century, dating from the first appearance of Cowper and Burns, must be regarded as the most remarkable period in the history of our poetical literature after the age of Spenser and Shakspeare. And if, in comparing the produce of the two great revivals, the one happening at the transition from the sixteenth century into the seventeenth, the other at that from the eighteenth into the nineteenth, we find something of greater freshness, freedom, raciness, and true vigour, warmth, and nature, in our earlier than in our modern poetry, it is not to be denied on the other hand that in some respects the latter may claim a preference over the former. It is much less debased by

the intermixture of dross or alloy with its fine gold—much less disfigured by occasional pedantry and affectation—much more correct and free from flaws and incongruities of all kinds. In whatever regards form, indeed, our more modern poetry is certainly, taken in its general character, the more perfect; and that notwithstanding many passages to be found in the greatest of our elder poets, which in mere writing have perhaps never since been equalled, nor are likely ever to be excelled; and notwithstanding also something of greater boldness with which their position enabled them to handle the language, thereby attaining sometimes a force and expressiveness not so much within the reach of their successors in our own day. The literary cultivation of the language throughout two additional centuries, and the stricter discipline under which it has been reduced, may have brought loss or inconvenience in one direction, as well as gain in another; but the gain certainly preponderates. Even in the matter of versification, the lessons of Milton, of Dryden, and of Pope have no doubt been upon the whole instructive and beneficial; whatever of misdirection any of them may have given for a time to the form of our poetry passed away with his contemporaries and immediate followers, and now little or nothing but the good remains—the example of the superior care and uniform finish, and also something of sweetest and deepest music, as well as much of spirit and brilliancy, that were unknown to our earlier poets. In variety and freedom, as well as in beauty, majesty, and richness of versification, some of our living or recent writers have not been excelled by any of their predecessors; and the versification of the generality of our modern poets is

greatly superior to that of the common run of those of the age of Elizabeth and James.

One remarkable distinction between the Elizabethan and the recent era is, that of the poetical produce of the latter a much more inconsiderable portion ran into the dramatic form. Coleridge, indeed, translated 'Wallenstein,' and wrote his tragedies of 'Zapolya' and 'Remorse:' Scott (but not till after all his other works in verse) produced what he called his dramatic sketch of 'Halidon Hill,' and his three-act plays of 'The Doom of Devorgoil,' and 'The Ayrshire Tragedy,' in all of which attempts he seemed to be deserted both by his power of dialogue and his power of poetry: Byron, towards the close of his career, gave new proof of the wonderful versatility of his genius by his 'Marino Faliero,' his 'Two Foscari,' his 'Sardanapalus,' and his 'Werner,' besides his 'Manfred,' and his mystery of 'Cain,' in another style: and Shelley, in 1819, gave to the world perhaps the greatest of modern English tragedies in his 'Cenci.' This, we believe, was nearly the sum total of the dramatic poetry produced by the more eminent poetical writers of the first quarter of the present century. The imitation of the old Elizabethan drama, of which we have since had so much, only began to become a rage after the day which these great names had illustrated began to decline. Joanna Baillie, indeed, still living, the honoured survivor of so many of her contemporaries and of her successors, had published the first volume of her 'Plays on the Passions' so long ago as in 1798; the second followed in 1802; and Lamb's tragedy of 'John Woodvil'—which the Edinburgh Reviewers profanely said might 'be fairly considered as supplying

the first of those lost links which connect the improvements of Æschylus with the commencement of the art'—appeared the same year; but it attracted little notice at the time, though both by this production, and much more by his 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets,' first published in 1808, Lamb had a principal share in reviving the general study and love of our early drama. Something, probably, was also done to spread the fashion of that sort of reading by the fictitious quotations from old plays which headed the chapters of several of the Waverley novels. But, perhaps, if we except Miss Baillie's plays, which came rather too early, the first dramatic work studiously composed in imitation of the language of the Elizabethan drama which, meeting the rising taste, excited general attention, was Mr. Milman's tragedy of 'Fazio,' which appeared in 1815, and was followed by his 'Anne Boleyn,' and several others in the same style.

PROSE LITERATURE.

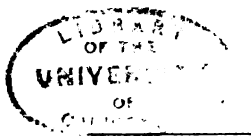
Of the prose literature of this recent era we have room for only the briefest notice. Among its most distinguished ornaments were some of the chief poetical writers of the time. Southey and Scott were two of the most voluminous prose writers of their day, or of any day; Coleridge also wrote much more prose than verse; both Campbell and Moore are considerable authors in prose; there are several prose pieces among the published works of Byron, of Shelley, and of Wordsworth; both Leigh Hunt and Wilson have perhaps acquired more of their fame and have given more wide-spread delight, as prose

writers than as poets; Charles Lamb's prose writings, his golden 'Essays of Elia,' and various critical disquisitions and short notices, abounding in original views and the deepest truth and beauty, have made his verse be nearly forgotten. This may be in part the cause of the more poetical complexion which our prose writing has generally assumed within the last thirty or forty years. Among the other most brilliant or otherwise conspicuous prose writers of the period we have been reviewing may be mentioned, in general literature, Sidney Smith, Hazlitt, Jeffrey, Playfair, Stewart, Alison, Thomas Brown; in political disquisition, Erskine, Cobbett, Brougham, Mackintosh, Bentham; in theological eloquence, Horsley, Wilberforce, Foster, Hall, Chalmers; in fictitious narrative, Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Opie, Miss Owenson (Lady Morgan), Mrs. Brunton, Miss Austen, Madame d'Arblay, Godwin, Maturin; in history, Fox, Mitford, Lingard, Mill, Hallam, Turner. The most remarkable prose works that were produced were Scott's novels, the first of which, 'Waverley,' appeared in 1814. A powerful influence upon literature was also exerted from the first by the 'Edinburgh Review,' begun in 1802; the 'Quarterly Review,' begun in 1809; and 'Blackwood's Magazine,' established in 1817.

PROGRESS OF SCIENCE.

Only a few of the most memorable facts connected with the progress of scientific discovery in England, during this period, can be very briefly noted. In astronomy Herschel continued to pursue his observations, commenced a short time before 1781 in which year he

discovered the planet Uranus; in 1802, appeared in the Philosophical Transactions his catalogue of 500 new nebulae and nebulous stars; in 1803 his announcement of the motions of double stars around each other; and a long succession of other important papers, illustrative of the construction of the heavens, followed down to within a few years of his death, at the age of eighty-four, in 1822. In chemistry, Davy, who had published his account of the effects produced by the respiration of nitrous oxide (the laughing gas) in 1800, in 1807 extracted metallic bases from the fixed alkalis, in 1808 demonstrated the similar decomposibility of the alkaline earths, in 1811 detected the true nature of chloride (oxymuriatic acid), and in 1815 invented his safety lamp; in 1804 Leslie published his 'Experimental Enquiry into the Nature and Properties of Heat;' in 1808 the Atomic Theory was announced by Dalton; and in 1814 its development and illustration were completed by Wollaston, to whom both chemical science and optics are also indebted for various other valuable services.



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